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THE

# WORKS

OF

# RICHARD HURD, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

VOL. I.

Printed by J. Nichols and Son,
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## LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1811.

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# DATES

## OF SOME OCCURRENCES

IN THE

## LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

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# DATES

## OF SOME OCCURRENCES

IN THE

## LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

*The following Particulars, in the Author's own hand-writing, and endorsed by him — "Some Occurrences in my Life. R. W."— were found amongst his papers after his decease.*

---

## DATES

*Of some Occurrences in my own Life.*

A. D.

RICHARD HURD was born at Congreve, in the Parish of Penkrich, in the County of Stafford, January 13 - 1719-20

He was the second of three children, all sons, of John and Hannah Hurd; plain, honest, and good people; of whom he can truly say with the poet —

*Si natura juberet, &c.*

They rented a considerable farm at Congreve, when he was born; but soon after removed to a larger at Penford, about half way between Brewood and Wolverhampton in the same County.

A. D.

in the Chapel of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, by the Bishop of Norwich, Dr. Gooch. 1744

He took his B. D.'s degree in - 1749

He published the same year Remarks on Mr. Weston's book on the *Rejection of Heathen Miracles*, and his Commentary on Horace's *Ars Poetica;* which last book introduced him to the acquaintance of Mr. Warburton, by whose recommendation to the Bishop of London, Dr. Sherlock, he was appointed Whitehall Preacher in May 1750

He published the Commentary on the Epistle to Augustus in - - 1751

— the new edition of both Comments, with Dedication to Mr. Warburton, in 1753

— the Dissertation on the Delicacy of Friendship in - - - 1755

His Father died Nov. 27 this year, æt. 70.

He published the Remarks on Hume's Natural History of Religion in - 1757

Was instituted this year, Feb. 16, to the Rectory of Thurcaston, in the County of Leicester, on the presentation of Emanuel College.

He published Moral and Political Dialogues - - - 1759

A. D.

He had the Sine-cure Rectory of Folkton, near Bridlington, Yorkshire, given him by the Lord Chancellor (Earl of Northington) on the recommendation of Mr. Allen, of Prior Park, near Bath, November 2, - - - - 1762

He published the Letters on Chivalry and Romance this year.

— Dialogues on Foreign Travel in 1763

And Letter to Dr. Leland of Dublin in 1764

He was made Preacher of Lincoln's Inn, on the recommendation of Mr. Charles Yorke, &c. November 6, - - 1765

Was collated to the Archdeaconry of Gloucester, on the death of Dr. Geekie, by the Bishop, August 27, - 1767

Was appointed to open the Lecture of Bishop Warburton on Prophecy in - 1768

He took the degree of D. D. at Cambridge Commencement this year.

He published the Sermons on Prophecy in - - - - 1772

His Mother died Feb. 27, 1773, æt. 88. 1773

He was consecrated Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, the 12th of February 1775

He published the 1st Volume of Sermons preached at Lincoln's Inn 1776

A. D.

And was made Preceptor to the Prince of Wales and his brother Prince Frederick, the 5th of June the same year. 1776

Preached before the Lords, December 13, 1776, first Fast for the war.

He lost his old and best friend, Bishop Warburton, June 7th - - 1779

He published the 2d and 3d Volumes of Sermons in - - - 1780

These three Volumes were published at the desire of the Bench of Lincoln's Inn.

He was elected Member of the Royal Society of Gottingen, January 11 1781

The Bishop of Winchester [Dr. Thomas] died Tuesday, May 1, 1781. Received a gracious letter from his Majesty the next morning, by a special messenger from Windsor, with the offer of the See of Worcester, in the room of Bishop North, to be translated to Winchester, and of the Clerkship of the Closet, in the room of the late Bishop of Winchester.

On his arrival at Hartlebury Castle in July that year, resolved to put the Castle into complete order, and to build a Library, which was much wanted.

A. D.

The Library was finished in - 1782
and furnished with a collection of books, late Bishop Warburton's, and ordered by his Will to be sold, and the value given to the Infirmary at Gloucester - 1783
To these, other considerable additions have been since made.

Archbishop Cornwallis died in 1783.

Had the offer of the Archbishoprick from his Majesty, with many gracious expressions, and pressed to accept it; but humbly begged leave to decline it, as a charge not suited to his temper and talents, and much too heavy for him to sustain, especially in these times.

The King was pleased not to take offence at this freedom, and then to enter with him into some confidential conversation on the subject. It was offered to the Bishop of London, Dr. Lowth, and refused by him, as was foreseen, on account of his ill health. It was then given to Dr. Moore, Bishop of Bangor.

Added a considerable number of books to the new Library at Hartlebury in 1784

Confirmed Prince Edward [their Majesties' 4th son] in the Chapel of Windsor Castle, May 14th, 1785 - 1785

A. D.

Added more books to the Library this year. And put the last hand (at least he thinks so) to the Bishop of Gloucester's Life, to be prefixed to the new edition of his works now in the press. 1785

Confirmed Princess Augusta [their Majesties' second daughter] in the Chapel of Windsor Castle, Dec. the 24th this year 1785

Preached in the Chapel the next day (Christmas day) and administered the Sacrament to their Majesties and the Princess Royal and Princess Augusta.

Preached before the Lords the 30th of January - - - 1786

His Majesty was pleased this year to bestow a prebend of Worcester [vacant by the death of Dr. Young] on my Chaplain, Mr. Kilvert.

Preached before their Majesties and Royal Family in the Chapel of Windsor Castle, and administered the Sacrament to them, on Christmas day 1786.

In the end of February this year - 1788 was published in seven volumes 4to a complete edition of the works of Bishop Warburton. The *Life* is omitted for the present.

A. D.

March 13, 1788, a fine gold Medal was 1788
this day given me by his Majesty at the Queen's House.

The King's head on one side. The Reverse was taken from a Seal of mine[a], which his Majesty chanced to see, and approved.

The Die was cut by Mr. Burch, and the Medal designed for the annual Prize-Dissertation on Theological Subjects in the University of Gottingen.

This summer the King came to Cheltenham to drink the waters, and was attended by the Queen, the Princess Royal, and the Princesses Augusta and Elizabeth. They arrived at Cheltenham in the evening of Saturday July the 12th, and resided in a July 12.
house of Earl Falconberg. From Cheltenham they made excursions to several places in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, and were every where received with joy by all ranks of people.

On Saturday, August the second, They Aug. 2.
were pleased to visit Hartlebury, at the distance of thirty-three miles, or more.

[a A Cross with the initials on a label — I. N. R. I. a Glory above, and the motto below ΕΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ.]

A. D.

The Duke of York came from London to Cheltenham the day before, and was pleased to come with them. They arrived at Hartlebury at half an hour past eleven. Lord Courtoun, Mr. Digby (the Queen's Vice-Chamberlain), Col. Gwin (one of the King's Equerries), the Countesses of Harcourt and Courtoun, composed the suite. Their Majesties, after seeing the House, breakfasted in the Library; and, when they had reposed themselves some time, walked into the Garden, and took several turns on the Terrases, especially the Green Terras in the Chapel Garden. Here they shewed themselves to an immense croud of people, who flocked in from the neighbourhood, and standing on the rising grounds in the Park, saw, and were seen, to great advantage. The day being extremely bright, the shew was agreeable and striking. About two o'clock, their Majesties, &c. returned to Cheltenham. 1788

On the Tuesday following, August the fifth, their Majesties, with the three Princesses, arrived at 8 o'clock in the evening at the Bishop's Palace in Worcester, to attend the charitable meeting of the three Quires of Aug. 5.

A. D.
Worcester, Hereford, and Gloucester, for 1788
the benefit of the widows and orphans of the poorer Clergy of those Dioceses; which had been fixed, in consequence of the signification of the King's intention to honour that solemnity with his presence, for the 6th, 7th, and 8th of that month.

The next morning a little before 10 o'clock, the King was pleased to receive the compliments of the Clergy. The Bishop, in the name of himself, Dean and Chapter and Clergy of the Church and Diocese, addressed the King in the Great Hall, in a short speech[b], to which his Majesty was

[b] "We, the Bishop and Dean and Chapter and Clergy of the Church and Diocese of Worcester, humbly beg leave to present our dutiful respects to your Majesty, and to express the joy we feel on your Majesty's arrival at this place.

"Your presence, Sir, gladdens the hearts of your faithful subjects, wherever you go. But We, the Clergy of this place, have a peculiar cause to rejoice in the honour vouchsafed us at this time; a time, devoted to an excellent charity for the relief of a most deserving, though unfortunate part of our Order. This gracious notice and countenance of us at such a moment, shews, as your whole life has invariably done, your zealous concern for the in-

A. D.

pleased to return a gracious answer. He 1788
had then the honour to address the Queen in a few words, to which a gracious reply was made; and they had all the honour to kiss the King's and Queen's hand.

Soon after 10, the Corporation, by their Recorder, the Earl of Coventry, addressed and went through the same ceremony of kissing the King's hand. Then the King had a

terests of Religion, and the credit of its Ministers. And we trust, Sir, that we entertain a due sense of this goodness; and that we shall never be wanting in the most dutiful attachment to your Majesty's sacred person, to your august house, and to your mild and beneficent government.

"In our daily celebration of the sacred offices, committed to our charge, we make it our fervent prayer to Almighty God, that He will be pleased to take your Majesty into his special protection; and that your Majesty may live long, very long, in health and honour, to be the blessing and the delight of all your people."

[The above is the substance, and I believe the words, of my address to the King at Worcester, 6th August 1788.]

To this address his Majesty was pleased to return an answer, very gracious, personally, to the Bishop himself, and expressive of the highest regard for the Clergy of the Established Church. R. W.

A. D.
1788

Levée in the Great Hall, which lasted till 11, when their Majesties, &c. walked through the Court of the Palace to the Cathedral, to attend divine Service and a Sermon. The Apparitor General, 2 Sextons, 2 Virgers, and 8 Beadsmen, walked before the King (as on great occasions they usually do before the Bishop); the Lord in waiting (Earl of Oxford) on the King's right hand, and the Bishop in his lawn on the left. After the King, came the Queen and Princesses, attended by the Countesses of Pembroke and Harcourt (Ladies of the Bed-chamber), and the Countess of Courtown, and the rest of their Suite. At the entrance of the Cathedral, their Majesties were received by the Dean and Chapter in their Surplices and hoods, and conducted to the foot of the stairs leading to their seat in a Gallery prepared and richly furnished by the Stewards[c] for their use, at the bottom of the Church near the West window.

The same ceremony was observed the two

[c Edward Foley, Esq. Member of Parliament for the County, and William Langford, D. D. late Prebendary of Worcester.]

A.D.

following days, on which they heared sacred musick, but without prayers or a sermon. On the last day Aug. 8th, the King was pleased to give £.200 to the charity: and in the evening attended a concert in the College Hall for the benefit of the Stewards. 1788

On Saturday morning, Aug. 9th, the King and Queen, &c, returned to Cheltenham. Aug. 9

During their Majesties' stay at the Palace, they attended prayers in the Chapel of the Palace every morning (except the first, when the service was performed in the Church) which were read by the Bishop.

The King at parting was pleased to put into my hands for the poor of the City £.50, and the Queen £.50 more; which I desired the Mayor (Mr. Davis) to see distributed amongst them in a proper manner.

The King also left £.300 in my hands towards releasing the Debtors in the County and City Jails.

During the three days at Worcester, the concourse of people of all ranks was im-

A. D.

mense, and the joy universal. The weather was uncommonly fine. And no accident of any kind interrupted the mutual satisfaction, which was given, and received, on this occasion. 1788

On Saturday, August 16, the King and Royal Family left Cheltenham, and returned that evening to Windsor. Aug. 16

In the beginning of November following, the King was seized with that illness, which was so much lamented. It continued till the end of February 1789, when his Majesty happily recovered. Nov. 1 1789 Feb. 28

Soon after I had his Majesty's command to attend him at Kew; and on March 15, I administered the Sacrament to his Majesty at Windsor in the Chapel of the Castle, as also on Easter Sunday, April 12, and preached both days. Mar. 15 April 12

At the Sacrament of March 15, the King was attended only by three or four of his Gentlemen: On Easter-day, the Queen, Princess Royal, and Princesses Augusta and Elizabeth, with several Lords and Gentlemen and Ladies of the Court, attended the King to the Chapel, and received the Sacrament with him.

A. D.

On April 23 [St. George's Day] a public thanksgiving for the King's recovery was appointed. His Majesty, the Queen, and Royal Family, with the two Houses of Parliament, &c. went in procession to St. Paul's. The Bishop of London preached. I was not well enough to be there. 1789 April 23

May 28, 1790, the Duke of Montagu died. He was a nobleman of singular worth and virtue; of an exemplary life; and of the best principles in Church and State. As Governor to the Prince of Wales and Prince Frederick, he was very attentive to his charge, and executed that trust with great propriety and dignity. The Preceptor was honoured with his confidence: and there never was the least misunderstanding between them; or so much as a difference of opinion as to the manner in which the education of the Princes should be conducted. 1790 May 28

In October 1790, I had the honour to receive from the King the present of two fine full-length pictures of his Majesty and the Queen, copied from those at the Queen's House, St. James's Park, painted by the late Mr. Gainsborough.

A. D.

These pictures are put up in the great Drawing-room at the Palace in Worcester, and betwixt them, over the fire-place, is fixed an oval tablet of white marble with the following Inscription in Gold Letters. 1790

"Hospes,
Imagines, quas contemplaris,
Augustorum Principum,
Georgii III, et Charlottæ Conjugis,
Rex ipse
Richardo Episcopo Vigorniensi
Donavit,
1790."

My younger Brother, Mr. Thomas Hurd, of Birmingham, died on Saturday, Sept. 17, 1791. 1791 Sept. 17

My elder Brother, Mr. John Hurd, of Hatton, near Shifnal, died on Thursday, December 6, 1792. 1792 Dec. 6

My noble and honoured friend, the Earl of Mansfield, died March 20, 1793. 1793 March 20

My old and much esteemed friend, Dr. Balguy, Prebendary and Archdeacon of Winchester, died January 19, 1795. 1795 Jan. 19

The Life of Bishop Warburton, which was sent to the press in Autumn last, was

A. D.

not printed off till the end of January, nor 1795
published till towards the end of February Feb. 24
this year.

Printed in the course of this year at the Kidderminster press a Collection of Bishop Warburton's Letters to me, to be published after my death for the benefit of the Worcester Infirmary.—The edition consisted of 250 Copies, 4to — was finished at the press Dec. 1
in the beginning of December.

In the Summer of 1796 visited my Dio- 1796
cese in person, I have great reason to sup- June
pose for the last time; being in the 77th 17 to 30
year of my age — *fiat voluntas Dei!*

Mrs. Stafford Smith, late Mrs. Warburton, died at Fladbury, September 1, 1796. Sept. 1

Mr. Mason died at Aston, April 5, 1797. 1797
He was one of my oldest and most respected April 5
friends. How few of this description now remain!

By God's great mercy enter this day [24 1799
Jan. 1799] into my 80th year. Ps. xc. 10. Jan. 24
But see, 1 Cor. xv. 22. Rom. viii. 18.
1 Pet. i. 3—5. Χάρις τῷ Θεῷ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ αὐτοῦ δωρεᾷ. 2 Cor. ix. 15.

It pleased God that I was able this Sum- May 27 to
mer to confirm over all parts of my Diocese. June 14

A. D.

And to visit my Diocese in person once more in June 1800. — L. D. 1800 June 6 to 17

Lost my old and worthy friend Dr. Heberden, in the 91st or 92nd year of his age, May 16, 1801. 1801 May 16

Consecrated, on Tuesday the 15th of June, 1802, the new Church and Churchyard of Lower Eatington, near Shipston, in Warwickshire. 1802 June 15

My most deserving, unhappy, friend, Dr. William Arnald, died at Leicester, August 5, 1802. Aug. 5

Visited my Diocese by Commission — Commissioners, Dr. Arnold, my Chancellor, and Dr. Evans, Archdeacon. 1803 May 31 to June 3

St. James' day, July 25, 1804, held an Ordination in Hartlebury Chapel—3 Deacons, 5 Priests — the last I can expect to undertake. 1804 July 25

Confirmations by the Bishop of Chester (Dr. Majendie.) March 27, Stratford. 1805 March 27

28, Bromsgrove. 28

29, Hales Owen. 29

— by the Bishop of Hereford (Dr. Cornwall.) June 14, Worcester June 14

15, Pershore 15

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TO

SIR EDWARD LITTLETON, BART.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING reviewed these Sheets with some care, I beg leave to put them into your hands, as a testimony of the respect I bear you; and, for the time that such things may have the fortune to live, as a monument of our friendship.

You see, by the turn of this address, you have nothing to fear from that offensive adulation, which has so much dishonoured Letters. You and I have lived together on other terms. And I should be ashamed to offer you even such a trifle as this, in a manner that would give you a right to think meanly of its author.

Your extreme delicacy allows me to say nothing of my obligations, which otherwise would demand my warmest acknowledgments. For your constant

favour has followed me in all ways, in which you could contrive to express it. And indeed I have never known any man more sensible to the good offices of his friends, and even to their good intentions, or more disposed, by every proper method, to acknowledge them. But you much over-rate the little services, which it has been in my power to render to you. I had the honour to be intrusted with a part of your education, and it was my duty to contribute all I could to the success of it. But the task was easy and pleasant. I had only to cultivate that good sense, and those generous virtues, which you brought with you to the University, and which had already grown up to some maturity under the care of a man, to whom we had both of us been extremely obliged; and who possessed every talent of a perfect institutor of youth in a degree, which, I believe, has been rarely found in any of that profession, since the days of *Quinctilian*.

I wish this small tribute of respect, in which I know how cordially you join with me, could be any honour to the memory of an excellent person[a], who loved us both, and was less known, in his life-time, from that obscure situation to which the caprice of fortune oft condemns the most accomplished characters, than his highest merit deserved.

[a] The Reverend Mr. BUDWORTH, Head-Master of the Grammar School at BREWOOD, in Staffordshire. He died in 1745.

It was to cherish and improve that taste of polite letters, which his early care had instilled into you, that you required me to explain to you the following exquisite piece of the best poet. I recollect with pleasure how welcome this slight essay then was to you; and am secure of the kind reception you will now give to it; improved, as I think it is, in some respects, and presented to you in this public way.—I was going to say, how much you benefited by this poet (the fittest of all others, for the study of a gentleman) in your acquaintance with his *moral*, as well as critical writings; and how successfully you applied yourself to every other part of learning, which was thought proper for you—But I remember my engagements with you, and will not hazard your displeasure by saying too much. It is enough for me to add, that I truly respect and honour you; and that, for the rest, I indulge in those hopes, which every one, who knows you, entertains from the excellence of your nature, from the hereditary honour of your family, and from an education in which you have been trained to the study of the best things.

I am,

DEAR SIR,

Your most faithful and

most obedient Servant,

R. HURD.

EMAN. COLL. CAMB.
June 21, 1757.

# INTRODUCTION.

IT is agreed on all hands, that the antients are our masters in the *art* of composition. Such of their writings, therefore, as deliver instructions for the exercise of this *art*, must be of the highest value. And, if any of them hath acquired a credit, in this respect, superior to the rest, it is, perhaps, the *following work*: which the learned have long since considered as a kind of *summary* of the rules of good writing; to be gotten by heart by every young student; and to whose decisive authority the greatest masters in taste and composition must finally submit.

But the more unquestioned the credit of this poem is, the more it will concern the public, that it be justly and accurately understood. The writer of these sheets then believed it might be of use, if he took some pains to clear the sense, connect the method, and ascertain the scope and purpose, of this admired epistle. Others, he knew indeed, and some of the first fame for critical learning, had been before him in this attempt. Yet he did not find

himself prevented by their labours; in which, besides innumerable lesser faults, he, more especially, observed two inveterate errors, of such a sort, as must needs perplex the genius, and distress the learning of *any* commentator. The *one* of these respects the SUBJECT; the other, the METHOD of the *Art of poetry*. It will be necessary to say something upon each.

1. That the *Art of poetry*, at large, is not the *proper* subject of this piece, is so apparent, that it hath not escaped the dullest and least attentive of its critics. For, however all the different *kinds* of poetry might appear to enter into it, yet every one saw, that *some* at least were very slightly considered: whence the frequent attempts, the *artes et institutiones poeticæ*, of writers both at home and abroad, to supply its deficiencies. But, though this truth was seen and confessed, it unluckily happened, that the sagacity of his numerous commentators went no further. They still considered this famous epistle as a *collection*, though not a *system*, of criticisms on poetry in general; with this concession however, that the stage had evidently the largest share in it[a]. Under the influence of this prejudice, several writers of name took upon them to comment and explain it: and with the success, which was to be expected from so fatal a mistake on setting out, as the not seeing, "that the proper and sole purpose of the

[a] Satyra hæc est in sui sæculi poetas, PRÆCIPUE vero in Romanum drama. Baxter.

"author, was, not to abridge the Greek critics, "whom he probably never thought of; nor to "amuse himself with composing a short critical "system, for the general use of poets, which every "line of it absolutely confutes; but, simply to criti-"cize the ROMAN DRAMA." For to this end, not the tenor of the work only, but, as will appear, every single precept in it, ultimately refers. The mischiefs of this original error have been long felt. It hath occasioned a constant perplexity in defining the *general* method, and in fixing the import of *particular* rules. Nay its effects have reached still further. For, conceiving as they did, that the whole had been composed out of the Greek critics, the labour and ingenuity of its interpreters have been misemployed in picking out authorities, which were not wanted, and in producing, or, more properly, by their studied refinements in *creating*, conformities, which were never designed. Whence it hath come to pass, that, instead of investigating the order of the poet's own reflexions, and scrutinizing the peculiar state of the Roman stage (the methods, which common sense and common criticism would prescribe) the world hath been nauseated with insipid lectures on *Aristotle* and *Phalereus*; whose solid sense hath been so attenuated and subtilized by the delicate operation of French criticism, as hath even gone some way towards bringing the *art* itself into disrepute.

2. But the wrong explications of this poem have

arisen, not from the misconception of the *subject* only, but from an inattention to the METHOD of it. The *latter* was, in part, the genuin consequence of the *former*. For, not suspecting an unity of design in the subject, its interpreters never looked for, or could never find a consistency of disposition in the method. And this was indeed the very block upon which HEINSIUS, and, before him, JULIUS SCALIGER, himself, stumbled. These illustrious critics, with all the force of genius, which is required to disembarrass an involved subject, and all the aids of learning, that can lend a ray to enlighten a dark one, have, notwithstanding, found themselves utterly unable to unfold the order of this epistle; insomuch, that SCALIGER[b], hath boldly pronounced the conduct of it to be *vicious*; and HEINSIUS, had no other way to evade the charge, than by recurring to the forced and uncritical expedient of a licentious transposition. The truth is, they were both in one common error, That the poet's purpose had been to write a criticism of the art of poetry at large, and not, as is here shewn, of the Roman drama in particular. But there is something more to be observed, in the case of HEINSIUS. For, as will be made appear in the notes on particular places, this critic did not pervert the order of the piece, from a simple mistake about the drift of the subject, but, also, from a total inapprehension of the genuin charm and beauty of the *epistolary method*. And, be-

b Præf. in LIB. POET. et l. vi. p. 338.

cause I take this to be a principal cause of the wrong interpretations, that have been given of all the epistles of Horace; and it is, in itself, a point of curious criticism, of which little or nothing hath been said by any good writer, I will take the liberty to enlarge upon it.

THE EPISTLE, however various in its appearances, is, in fact, but of *two* kinds; *one* of which may be called the DIDACTIC; the *other*, the ELEGIAC epistle. By the FIRST I mean all those epistles, whose end is to *instruct*; whether the subject be *morals*, *politics*, *criticism*, or, in general, *human life*: by the LATTER, all those, whose end is to *move*; whether the occasion be *love*, *friendship*, *jealousy*, or other private distresses. If there are some of a lighter kind in Horace, and other good writers, which seem not reducible to either of these two classes, they are to be regarded only, as the triflings of their pen, and deserve not to be considered, as making a *third* and distinct species of this poem.

Now these two kinds of the *epistle*, as they differ widely from each other in their *subject* and *end*, so do they likewise in their *original*: though both *flourished* at the same time, and are both wholly *Roman*.

I. The former, or DIDACTIC epistle, was, in fact, the true and proper offspring of the SATIRE. It will be worth while to reflect how this happened. *Satire*, in its origin, I mean in the rude *fescennine farce*, from which the idea of this poem was taken

was a mere extemporaneous jumble of mirth and ill-nature. ENNIUS, who had the honour of introducing it under its new name, without doubt, civilized both, yet left it without form or method; it being only, in his hands, a rhapsody of poems on different subjects, and in different measures. Common sense disclaiming the extravagance of this heterogeneous mixture, LUCILIUS advanced it, in its next step, to an unity of *design* and *metre;* which was so considerable a change, that it procured him the high appellation of INVENTOR of this poem. Though, when I say, that Lucilius introduced into satire *an unity of metre*, I mean only, in *the same piece;* for the measure, in different satires, appears to have been different. That the *design* in him was *one*, I conclude, *first*, Because Horace expresly informs us, that *the form or kind of writing* in the satires of Lucilius was exactly the same with *that* in his own; in which no one will pretend, that there is the least appearance of that rhapsodical, detached form, which made the character of the *old satire*. But, *principally*, because, on any other supposition, it does not appear, what could give Lucilius a claim to that high appellation of INVENTOR of this poem. That he was the *first*, who copied the manner of the *old comedy* in satire, could never be sufficient for this purpose. For all, that he derived into it from thence, was, as Quinctilian speaks, *libertas atque inde acerbitas et abunde salis.* It sharpened his *invective*, and polished his *wit*, that is, it im-

proved the *air*, but did not alter the *form* of the satire. As little can a right to this title be pleaded from the *uniformity of measure*, which he introduced into it. For *this*, without an *unity of design*, is so far from being an alteration for the better, that it even heightens the absurdity; it being surely more reasonable to adapt different measures to different subjects, than to treat a number of inconnected and quite different subjects in the *same* measure. When therefore Horace tells us, that Lucilius was the *Inventor* of the satire, it must needs be understood, that he was the FIRST, who, from its former confused state, reduced it into a regular consistent poem, respecting one main *end*, as well as observing one *measure*. Little now remained for HORACE but to polish and refine. His only material alteration was, that he appropriated to the satire ONE, that is, the heroic metre.

From this short history of the satire we collect, 1. that its design was *one*: And 2. we learn, what was the general form of its composition. For, arising out of a loose, disjointed, miscellany, its method, when most regular, would be free and unconstrained; nature demanding some chain of connexion, and a respect to its origin requiring that connexion to be slight and somewhat concealed. But its *aim*, as well as origin, exacted this careless method. For being, as Diomedes observes, *archææ comœdiæ charactere compositum*, "professedly written after the manner of the old comedy," it was of

course to admit the familiarity of the comic muse; whose genius is averse from all constraint of *order*, save that only which a natural, successive train of thinking unavoidably draws along with it. And this, by the way, accounts for the dialogue air, so frequent in the Roman satire, as likewise for the looser numbers which appeared so essential to the grace of it. It was in learned allusion to this comic genius of the satire, that Mr. Pope hath justly characterized it in the following manner:

"Horace still charms with graceful negligence,
"And, without method, TALKS us into sense."

2. It being now seen, what was the real form of the *satire*, nothing, it is plain, was wanting, but the application of a particular address, to constitute the *didactic epistle*: the structure of this poem, as prescribed by the laws of nature and good sense, being in nothing different from that of the *other*. For here 1. an *unity* of subject or design is indispensably necessary, the freedom of a miscellaneous matter being permitted only to the familiar letter. And 2. not professing *formally* to instruct (which alone justifies the severity of strict method) but, when of the gravest kind, in the way of address only to *insinuate* instruction, it naturally takes an air of negligence and inconnexion, such as we have before seen essential to the satire. All which is greatly confirmed by the testimony of *one*, who could not be uninformed in these matters. In addressing his friend on the object of his studies, he says,

*sive*

*Liventem* satiram *nigra rubigine turpes,*
*Seu tua* NON ALIA *splendescat* epistola CURA.

[Stat. lib. i. Sylv. Tiburt. M. V.]

plainly intimating, that the rules and labour of composition were exactly the same in these two poems. Though the critics on Statius, not apprehending this identity, or exact correspondence between the *satire* and *epistle*, have unnecessarily, and without warrant, altered the text, in this place, from ALIA into ALTA.

3. The general form and structure of *this* epistle being thus clearly understood, it will now be easy, in few words, to deduce the peculiar laws of its composition.

And 1. it cannot wholly divest itself of all method: For, having only one point in view, it must of course pursue it by some kind of connexion. The progress of the mind in rational thinking requires, that the chain be never broken entirely, even in its freest excursions.

2. As there must needs be a *connexion*, so *that connexion* will best answer its end and the purpose of the writer, which, whilst it leads, by a sure train of thinking, to the conclusion in view, conceals itself all the while, and leaves to the reader the satisfaction of supplying the intermediate links, and joining together, in his own mind, what is left in a seeming posture of neglect and inconnexion. The art of furnishing this gratification, so respectful to

the sagacity of the reader, without putting him to the trouble of a painful investigation, is what constitutes the supreme charm and beauty of EPISTOLARY METHOD.

II. What hath hitherto been advanced respects chiefly the *didactic* form. It remains to say something of that other *species* of the epistle, the ELEGIAC; which, as I observed, had quite another *original*. For this apparently sprung up from what is properly called the *Elegy*: a poem of very antient Greek extraction: naturally arising from the plaintive, querulous humour of mankind; which, under the pressure of any grief, is impatient to break forth into wailings and tender expostulations, and finds a kind of relief in indulging and giving a loose to that flow of sorrow, which it hath not strength or resolution wholly[c] to restrain. This is the account of the *Elegy* in its proper Greek form; a negligent, inconnected, abrupt species of writing, perfectly suited to an indolent disposition and passionate heart. Such was OVID'S; who, taking advantage of this character of the elegy, contrived[d] a new kind of poetry, without the expence of much invention, or labour to himself. For, collecting, as it were, those scattered hints, which composed the elegy,

[c] *Mœrorem minui*, says Tully, grieving for the loss of his daughter, *dolorem nec potui, nec, si possem*, VELLEM. [Ep. ad Att. xii. 28.] A striking picture of real grief!

[d] *Vel tibi composita cantetur* EPISTOLA *voce;*

IGNOTUM HOC ALIIS ILLE NOVAVIT OPUS.

ART. AMAT. l. iii. v. 345.

and directing them to one principal view; and superadding a personal address, he became the author of what is here styled the *Elegiac* epistle; beautiful models of which we have in his HEROIDES, and the *Epistles from* PONTUS. We see then the difference of *this* from the *didactic* form. They have both one principal end and point in view. But the *Didactic*, being of a cooler and more sedate turn, pursues its design uniformly and connects easily. The *Elegiac*, on the contrary, whose end is *emotion*, not *instruction*, hath all the abruptness of irregular disordered passion. It catches at remote and distant hints, and starts at once into a digressive train of thinking, which it requires some degree of enthusiasm in the reader to follow.

Further than this it is not material to my present design to pursue this subject. More exact ideas of the form and constitution of this epistle, must be sought in that best example of it, the natural Roman poet. It may only be observed of the different qualities, necessary to those, who aspire to excel in these *two* species: that, as the *one* would make an impression on the *heart*, it can only do this by means of an exquisite *sensibility of nature and elegance of mind*; and that the *other*, attempting in the most inoffensive manner, to inform the *head*, must demand, to the full accomplishment of its purpose, *superior good sense, the widest knowledge of life*, and, above all, *the politeness of a consummate address*. That the *former* was the character-

istic of OVID's genius hath been observed, and known. How far the *latter* description agr HORACE can be no secret to those of his reader have any share, or conception of these talents t selves. But matters of this *nicer* kind are pro the objects, not of *criticism*, but of *senti* Let it suffice then to examine the poet's practic far only, as we are enabled to judge of it by standard of the preceding rules.

III. These rules are reducible to *three*. 1. *there be an unity in the subject*. 2. *a connexi the method*: and 3. *that such connexion be* All which I suppose to have been religiously served in the poet's conduct of *this*, *i. e.* the *dida* epistle. For,

1. The *subject* of each epistle is one: that one single point is prosecuted through the wh piece, notwithstanding that the address of the po and the delicacy of the subject may sometimes le him through a devious tract to it. Had his inte preters attended to this practice, so consonant the rule of nature before explained, they could n ver have found *an art of poetry* in the epistle, w are about to examine.

2. This one point, however it hath not bee seen[e], is constantly pursued by an uniform, con

[e] J. Scaliger says, *Epistolas, Græcorum more, Phocylidæ atqu Theognidis* [Horatius] *scripsit: præceptis philosophiæ divulsis minimeque inter se cohærentibus.* And of *this* Epistle, in particular, he presumes to say, *De Arte quæres quid sentiam. Quid? Equi-*

[illegible] than
[illegible] reader.
[illegible] to
[illegible] when
[illegible] or vi-
[illegible]

[illegible] clear
[illegible] strictest forms
[illegible] elegant progress
[illegible] insensibly [illegible]
[illegible] the cooler [illegible]
[illegible] ly, should [illegible]
[illegible] upon the [illegible]
[illegible] the laws of [illegible]
[illegible] ignorance of [illegible]
[illegible] abrupt and [illegible]
[illegible] agree to the impassi[illegible]
[illegible] *diductic epistle.*
[illegible] three-fold character [illegible]
[illegible] the view of the reader [illegible]
[illegible] the *Epistle to the* [illegible]
[illegible] commentary [illegible]
[illegible] of the several pa[illegible]

[illegible] *Arte sine arte* [illegible]
[illegible] great Critic; *Non solum* [illegible]
[illegible] *ut* [illegible] *non servarent* [illegible]
[illegible] *præcepta.* Sic Epistola [illegible]
[illegible] *ordinem seriemque* [illegible]
[illegible] *aliud transiit,* [illegible]
[illegible] *commetendum.* [Salmasii Not. [illegible]
[illegible] p. 13. Lugd. Bat. 1640].

CI

tinctly seen, the Commentary is rendered as concise as possible; some of the finer and less obvious connexions being more carefully observed and drawn out in the notes.

For the *kind* of interpretation itself, it must be allowed, of all others, the fittest to throw light upon a difficult and obscure subject, and, above all, to convey an exact idea of the scope and order of any work. It hath, accordingly, been so considered by several of the foreign, particularly the ITALIAN, critics; who have essayed long since to illustrate, in this way, the very piece before us. But the *success* of these foreigners is, I am sensible, a slender recommendation of their *method*. I chuse therefore to rest on the *single* authority of a great author, who, in his *edition* of our English Horace, the *best* that ever was given of any classic, hath now retrieved and established the full credit of it. What was the amusement of his pen, becomes indeed, the *labour* of inferior writers. Yet, on these unequal terms, it can be no discredit to have aimed at some resemblance of one of the least of those *merits*, which shed their united honours on the name of the illustrious *friend* and *commentator of* Mr. POPE.

# Q. HORATII FLACCI

## ARS POETICA

## EPISTOLA AD PISONES.

# Q. HORATII FLACCI

## ARS POETICA

## EPISTOLA AD PISONES.

HUMANO capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne;
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici? 5
Credite, Pisones, isti tabulae fore librum
Persimilem, cujus, velut aegri somnia, vanae
Fingentur species; ut nec pes, nec caput uni

COMMENTARY.

THE subject of this piece being, as I suppose, *one, viz. the state of the Roman Drama*, and common sense requiring, even in the freest forms of composition, some kind of *method*, the intelligent reader will not be surprised to find the poet prosecuting his subject in a regular, well-ordered *plan*; which, for the more exact description of it, I distinguish into three parts:

I. The first of them [from v. 1 to 89] is preparatory to the main subject of the epistle, containing some general rules and reflexions on poetry, but principally with an eye to the following parts: by which means it

Reddatur formae. Pictoribus atque poetis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas: 10
Scimus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim:
Sed non ut placidis coëant inmitia; non ut

COMMENTARY.

serves as an useful introduction to the poet's design, and opens with that air of ease and negligence, essential to the epistolary form.

II. The main body of the epistle [from v. 89 to 295] is laid out in regulating the *Roman* stage; but chiefly in giving rules for tragedy; not only as that was the sublimer species of the *Drama*, but, as it should seem, less cultivated and understood.

III. The last part [from v. 295 to the end] exhorts to correctness in writing; yet still with an eye, principally, to the *dramatic species*; and is taken up partly in removing the causes, that prevented it, and partly in directing to the use of such means, as might serve to promote it. Such is the general plan of the epistle. In order to enter fully into it, it will be necessary to trace the poet, attentively, through the elegant connexions of his own method.

## PART I.

### GENERAL REFLEXIONS ON POETRY.

THE epistle begins [to v. 9] with that general and fundamental precept *of preserving an unity in the subject and the disposition of the piece.* This is further explained by defining the use, and fixing the character of *poetic licence* [from v. 9 to 13] which unskilful writers often

Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.
Inceptis gravibus plerumque et magna professis
Purpureus, late qui splendeat, unus et alter 15
Adsuitur pannus: cum lucus, et ara Dianae,
Et properantis aquae per amoenos ambitus agros,
Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur arcus.
Sed nunc non erat his locus: et fortasse cupressum
Scis simulare: quid hoc, si fractis enatat exspes 20
Navibus, aere dato qui pingitur? amphora coepit
Institui, currente rota, cur urceus exit?
Denique sit quidvis; simplex dumtaxat et unum.
Maxima pars vatum, pater et juvenes patre digni,
Decipimur specie recti. Brevis esse laboro, 25
Obscurus fio: sectantem lenia nervi

COMMENTARY.

plead in defence of their transgressions against the law of UNITY. To v. 23 is considered and exposed that particular violation of *uniformity*, into which young poets especially, under the impulse of a warm imagination, are apt to run, arising from frequent and ill-timed descriptions. These, however beautiful in themselves, and with whatever mastery they may be executed, yet, if foreign to the subject, and incongruous to the place, where they stand, are extremely impertinent: a caution, the more necessary, as the fault itself wears the appearance of a *virtue*, and so writers [from v. 23 to 25] come to transgress the *rule of right* from their very ambition to observe it. There are two cases, in which this *ambition* remarkably misleads us. The *first* is when it tempts us to push an *acknowledged beauty* too far. Great beauties are always in the confines of great faults; and there-

Deficiunt animique: professus grandia turget:
Serpit humi tutus nimium timidusque procellae:
Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,
Delphinum silvis adpingit, fluctibus aprum. 30
In vitium ducit culpae fuga, si caret arte.
Aemilium circa ludum faber, unus et unguis
Exprimet, et mollis imitabitur aere capillos;
Infelix operis, summa: quia ponere totum 34
Nesciet. hunc ego me, si quid componere curem,
Non magis esse velim; quam naso vivere pravo,

COMMENTARY.

fore, by affecting superior excellence, we are easily carried into absurdity. Thus [from v. 25 to 30] *brevity* is often *obscurity; sublimity, bombast; caution, coolness;* and, to come round to the point, a fondness for *varying and diversifying a subject*, by means of episodes and descriptions, such as are mentioned above [v. 15] will often betray a writer into that capital error of violating the *unity* of his piece. For, though variety be a real excellence under the conduct of true judgment, yet, when affected beyond the bounds of probability, and brought in solely to *strike* and *surprize*, it becomes unseasonable and absurd. The several episodes or descriptions, intended to give that variety, may be inserted in improper places; and then the absurdity is as great, as that of the painter, who, according to the illustration of v. 19, 20, should introduce a cypress into a sea-piece, or, according to the illustration of the present verse, who paints a dolphin in a wood, or a boar in the sea.

2. Another instance, in which we are misled by an *ambition of attaining to what is right*, is, when, through an excessive fear of committing faults, we disqualify

Spectandum nigris oculis nigroque capillo.
Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, aequam
Viribus; et versate diu, quid ferre recusent,
Quid valeant humeri. cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo. 41
Ordinis haec virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor;
Ut jam nunc dicat, jam nunc debentia dici
Pleraque differat et praesens in tempus omittat.

COMMENTARY.

ourselves for the just execution of a *whole*, or of such *particulars*, as are susceptible of real beauty. For not the affectation of superior excellencies only, but even

*In vitium ducit* culpae fuga, *si caret arte.*

This is aptly illustrated by the case of a sculptor. An over-scrupulous diligence to finish single and trivial parts in a statue, which, when most exact, are only not faulty, leaves him utterly incapable of doing justice to the more important members, and, above all, of designing and completing a *whole* with any degree of perfection. But this latter is commonly the defect of a minute genius; who, having taken in hand a design, which he is by no means able to execute, naturally applies himself to labour and finish those parts, which he finds are within his power. It is of consequence therefore [from v. 38 to 40] for every writer to be well acquainted with the nature and extent of his own talents: and to be careful to choose a subject, which is, in all its parts, proportioned to his strength and ability. Besides, from such an attentive survey of his subject, and of his capacity to treat it, he will also derive these further advantages [v. 41]. 1. That he cannot be wanting in a proper fund

Hoc amet, hoc spernat, promissi carminis auctor. 45
In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis,
Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum, si forte necesse est
Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum;
Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis 50
Continget: dabiturque licentia sumta pudenter,
Et nova factaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, si
Graeco fonte cadent, parce detorta. quid autem;

COMMENTARY.

of matter, wherewith to inlarge under every head: nor, 2. can he fail, by such a well-weighed choice, to dispose of his subject in the best and most convenient method. Especially, as to the latter, which is the principal benefit, he will perceive [to v. 46] where it will be useful to preserve, and where to change, the natural order of his subject, as may best serve to answer the ends of poetry.

Thus far some general reflexions concerning *poetical distribution*; principally, as it may be affected by false notions; 1. Of *poetic licence* [v. 10] and, 2. Of *poetic perfection* [v. 28]. But the same causes will equally affect the *language*, as *method*, of poetry. To these then are properly subjoined some directions about the *use of words*. Now this particular depending so entirely on what is out of the reach of rule, as the fashion of the age, the taste of the writer, and his knowledge of the language, in which he writes, the poet only gives directions about *new words*: or, since every language is necessarily imperfect, about the *coining of such words*, as the writer's necessity or convenience may demand. And here, after having prescribed [l. 46] a great *caution*

Caecilio Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademptum
Virgilio Varioque? ego cur adquirere pauca, 55
Si possum, invideor? quum lingua Catonis et Ennî
Sermonem patrium ditaverit, et nova rerum
Nomina protulerit. licuit, semperque licebit
Signatum praesente nota procudere nummum.
Ut silvis folia privos mutantur in annos; 60
Prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit aetas,
Et juvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque.
Debemur morti nos, nostraque: sive receptus

COMMENTARY.

and *sparingness* in the thing itself, he observes, 1. [to l. 49] That where it ought to be done, the better and less offensive way will be, not to coin a *word* entirely new (for this is ever a task of some envy) but, by means of an ingenious and happy position of a well-known word, in respect of some others, to give it a new air, and cast. Or, if it be necessary to *coin new words*, as it will be in subjects of an abstruse nature, and especially such, as were never before treated in the language, that then, 2. [to l. 54] this liberty is very allowable; but that the reception of them will be more easy, if we derive them gently, and without too much violence, from their proper source, that is, from a language, as the Greek, already known, and approved. And, to obviate the prejudices of over-scrupulous critics on this head, he goes on [from l. 54 to l. 73] in a vein of popular illustration, to alledge, in favour of this liberty, the examples of antient writers, and the vague, unsteddy nature of language itself.

Terra Neptunus classis Aquilonibus arcet,
Regis opus; sterilisve palus prius aptaque remis 65
Vicinas urbis alit, et grave sentit aratrum:
Seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis,
Doctus iter melius: mortalia cuncta peribunt:
Nedum sermonum stet honos, et gratia vivax. 69
Multa renascentur, quae jam cecidere; cadentque,
Quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula: si volet usus,
Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi.
Res gestae regumque ducumque, et tristia bella,
Quo scribi possent numero, monstravit Homerus.
Versibus inpariter junctis querimonia primum, 75
Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos.
Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiserit auctor,
Grammatici certant, et adhuc sub judice lis est.
Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo.
Hunc socci cepere pedem grandesque cothurni, 80
Alternis aptum sermonibus, et popularis
Vincentem strepitus, et natum rebus agendis.

COMMENTARY.

From these reflexions on poetry, at large, he proceeds now to *particulars*: the most obvious of which being the different *forms and measures* of poetic composition, he considers, in this view [from v. 75 to 86] the four great species of poetry, to which all others may be reduced, *the Epic*, *Elegiac*, *Dramatic*, and *Lyric*. But the distinction of the *measures* to be observed in the several species of poetry is so obvious, that there can scarcely be any mistake about them. The difficulty is

Musa dedit fidibus Divos, puerosque Deorum,
Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine primum,
Et juvenum curas, et libera vina referre. 85
Descriptas servare vices operumque colores,
Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, poeta salutor?
Cur nescire, pudens prave, quam discere malo?
Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non volt:
Indignatur item privatis ac prope socco 90
Dignis carminibus narrari coena Thyestae.
Singula quaeque locum teneant sortita decentem.
Interdum tamen et vocem comoedia tollit,
Iratusque Chremes tumido dilitigat ore.
Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri. 95
Telephus aut Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,
Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,

COMMENTARY.

to know [from v. 86 to 89] how far, each may partake of the *spirit* of other, without destroying that *natural and necessary difference*, which ought to subsist betwixt them all. To explane this, which is a point of great nicety, he considers [from v. 89 to 99] the case of dramatic poetry; the two species of which are as distinct from each other, as any two can be, and yet there are times, when the features of the one will be allowed to resemble those of the other. For, 1. Comedy, in the passionate parts, will admit of a tragic elevation: and, 2. Tragedy, in its soft distressful scenes, condescends to the ease of familiar conversation. But the poet had a further view in chusing this instance. For he gets by this means into the main of his subject, which was dra-

Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.
Non satis est pulchra esse poëmata; dulcia sunto,
Et quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunto.
Ut ridentibus adrident, ita flentibus adflent 101
Humani voltus. si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi: tunc tua me infortunia laedent.
Telephe, vel Peleu, male si mandata loqueris,
Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo. tristia moestum 105
Voltum verba decent; iratum, plena minarum;
Ludentem, lasciva; severum, seria dictu.
Format enim Natura prius nos intus ad omnem
Fortunarum habitum; juvat, aut inpellit ad iram,
Aut ad humum moerore gravi deducit, et angit:

COMMENTARY.

matic poetry, and, by the most delicate transition imaginable, proceeds [from l. 89 to 323] to deliver a series of rules, interspersed with historical accounts, and enlivened by digressions, for the regulation and improvement of the ROMAN STAGE.

## PART II.

### DIRECTIONS FOR THE REGULATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE ROMAN STAGE.

HAVING fixed the distinct limits and provinces of the two species of the drama, the poet enters directly on his subject, and considers, I. [from v. 99 to 119] the properties of the TRAGIC STYLE; which will be different, 1. [to v. 111] according to the *internal state and character* of the speaker: thus one sort of expression will become the *angry*; another, the *sorrowful*; this, the

Post effert animi motus interprete lingua. 111
Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta,
Romani tollent equitesque patresque cachinnum.
Intererit multum, Divusne loquatur, an heros;
Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juventa 115
Fervidus; et matrona potens, an sedula nutrix;
Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli;
Colchus, an Assyrius; Thebis nutritus, an Argis.
Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia finge,
Scriptor. Homereum si forte reponis Achillem;
Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer, 121
Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.
Sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,
Perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, tristis Orestes.
Si quid inexpertum scenae conmittis, et audes 125
Personam formare novam; servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.
Difficile est proprie communia dicere: tuque

COMMENTARY.

*gay*, that, the *severe*. And, 2. [from v. 111 to 119] according to the outward circumstances of *rank*, *age*, *office*, or *country*.

II. Next [to v. 179] he treats of the CHARACTERS, which are of two sorts. 1. *Old ones, revived:* and 2. *Invented, or new ones.* In relation to the *first* [from v. 119 to 125] the precept is, to *follow fame;* that is, to fashion the character according to the *received, standing idea*, which tradition and elder times have consecrated; that idea being the sole test, whereby to judge of it. 2. In respect of the *latter* [from v. 125 to 128] the great

Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus. 130
Publica materies privati juris erit, si
Non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem;
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres; nec desilies imitator in artum,
Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex.
Nec sic incipies, ut scriptor cyclicus olim: 136
FORTUNAM PRIAMI CANTABO, ET NOBILE BELLUM.
Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?
Parturiunt montes: nascetur ridiculus mus.
Quanto rectius hic, qui nîl molitur inepte! 140
DIC MIHI, MUSA, VIRUM, CAPTAE POST MOENIA TROJAE,
QUI MORES HOMINUM MULTORUM VIDIT ET URBIS.

COMMENTARY.

requisite is *uniformity*, or *consistency of representation*. But the formation of quite *new characters* is a work of great difficulty and hazard. For here, there is no generally received and fixed *archetype* to work after, but every one judges, of common right, according to the extent and comprehension of his own idea. Therefore [to v. 136] he advises to labour and refit *old characters and subjects*; particularly those, made known and authorized by the practice of Homer and the epic writers; and directs, at the same time, by what means to avoid that *servility and unoriginal air*, so often charged upon such pieces. I said *characters and subjects*, for his method leading him to guard against servility of imitation in point of *characters*, the poet chose to dispatch the whole affair of *servile imitation* at once, and therefore [to v. 136] includes *subjects*, as well as *characters*.

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem
Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,
Antiphaten, Scyllamque, et cum Cyclope Charybdin.
Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri, 146
Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo:
Semper ad eventum festinat; et in medias res,
Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit; et quae
Desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquit: 150
Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,

COMMENTARY.

But this very advice, about taking the subjects and characters from the epic poets, might be apt to lead into two faults, arising from the ill conduct of those poets themselves. For, 1. [to v. 146] the dignity and importance of a subject, made sacred by antient fame, had sometimes occasioned a boastful and ostentatious beginning, than which nothing can be more offensive. And, 2. The whole story being composed of great and striking particulars, injudicious writers, for fear of losing any part of it, which might serve to adorn their work, had been led to follow the *round of plain historic order*, and so had made the disposition of their piece *uninteresting and unartful*. Now both these improprieties, which appear so shocking in the *epic poem*, must needs, with still higher reason, deform the *tragic*. For, taking its rise, not from the flattering views of the *poet*, but the real situation of the *actor*, its opening must of necessity, be very simple and unpretending. And being, from its short term of action, unable naturally to prepare and bring about many events, it, of course, confines itself to *one*; as also for the sake of producing a due *distress*

Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.
Tu, quid ego et populus mecum desideret, audi;
Si fautoris eges aulaea manentis, et usque
Sessuri, donec cantor, Vos plaudite, dicat: 155
Aetatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores,
Mobilibusque decor naturis dandus et annis.
Reddere qui voces jam scit puer, et pede certo

COMMENTARY.

in the plot; which can never be wrought up to any *trying* pitch, unless the whole attention be made to fix on *one* single object. The way to avoid both these faults, will be to observe (for here the imitation cannot be too close) the well-judged practice of Homer.

Having thus considered the affair of *imitation*, and shewn how *old characters*, and, to carry it still further, *old* subjects, may be successfully treated, he resumes the head of *characters*, and proceeds more fully [from v. 153 to 179] to recommend it as a point of principal concern in the drawing of them, to be well acquainted with the manners, agreeing to the several successive periods and stages of human life. And this with propriety: for, though he had given a hint to this purpose before,

*Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juventâ*
*Fervidus,*

yet, as it is a point of singular importance, and a regard to *it*, besides other distinctions, must be constantly had in the draught of every character, it well deserved a separate consideration.

III. These instructions, which, in some degree, respect all kinds of poetry, being dismissed; he now delivers some rules more peculiarly relative to the case of

Signat humum; gestit paribus colludere, et irain
Collligit ac ponit temere, et mutatur in horas. 160
Inberbus juvenis, tandem custode remoto,
Gaudet equis canibusque et aprici gramine campi;
Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper,
Utilium tardus provisor, prodigus aeris,
Sublimis, cupidusque, et amata relinquere pernix.
Conversis studiis, aetas animusque virilis 166
Quaerit opes et amicitias, inservit honori;
Commisisse cavet, quod mox mutare laboret.
Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda; vel quod
Quaerit, et inventis miser abstinet, ac timet uti;
Vel quòd res omnis timide gelideque ministrat, 171
Dilator, spe lentus, iners, pavidusque futuri;
Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
Se puero, castigator, censorque minorum.
Multa ferunt anni venientes commoda secum, 175
Multa recedentes adimunt: ne forte seniles
Mandentur juveni partes, pueroque viriles.
Semper in adjunctis aevoque morabimur aptis.
Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur:

COMMENTARY.

the *drama*. And, as the *misapplication of manners*, which was the point he had been considering, was destructive of *probability*, this leads the poet, by a natural order, to censure some other species of misconduct, which have the *same effect*. He determines then, 1. [from v. 179 to 189] The case of *representation* and *recital*: or what it is, which renders some things more fit to be *acted* on the stage, others more fit to be *related* on it. Next, 2. In

Segnius inritant animos demissa per aurem, 180
Quam quae sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quae
Ipse sibi tradit spectator. non tamen intus
Digna geri promes in scenam: multaque tolles
Ex oculis, quae mox narret facundia praesens:
Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet; 185
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus;
Aut in avem Procne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.
Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.
Neve minor, neu sit quinto productior actu
Fabula, quae posci volt, et spectata reponi. 190
Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit: nec quarta loqui persona laboret.
Actoris partes chorus, officiumque virile
Defendat: neu quid medios intercinat actus,
Quod non proposito conducat et haereat apte. 195
Ille bonis faveatque et consilietur amice,
Et regat iratos, et amet pacare tumentis:
Ille dapes laudet mensae brevis, ille salubrem
Justitiam, legesque, et apertis otia portis:

COMMENTARY.

pursuance of the same point, *viz. probability* [to v. 193] he restrains the use of *machines*; and prescribes the number of *acts*, and of *persons*, to be introduced on the stage at the same time. And, 3. lastly, the *persona dramatis*, just mentioned, suggesting it to his thoughts, he takes occasion from thence to pass on to the *chorus* [from v. 193 to 202] whose double office it was, 1. To sustain the part of a *persona dramatis* in the acts; and, 2. To connect the *acts* with songs, persuading to good morals, and suitable to the subject. Further, tragedy

Ille tegat commissa, Deosque precetur et oret, 200
Ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis.
Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco juncta, tubaeque
Aemula; sed tenuis, simplexque foramine pauco,
Aspirare et adesse choris erat utilis, atque
Nondum spissa nimis conplere sedilia flatu: 205
Quo sane populus numerabilis, utpote parvus
Et frugi castusque verecundusque coibat.
Postquam coepit agros extendere victor, et urbem
Laxior amplecti murus, vinoque diurno
Placari Genius festis inpune diebus; 210
Accessit numerisque modisque licentia major.
Indoctus quid enim saperet liberque laborum,
Rusticus urbano confusus, turpis honesto?

COMMENTARY.

being, originally, nothing more than a *chorus* or song, set to music, from which practice the harmony of the regular chorus in aftertimes had its rise, he takes occasion to digress [from v. 202 to 220] in explaining the simplicity and barbarity of the *old*, and the refinements of the *later*, music. The application of this account of the dramatic music to the case of the tragic chorus, together with a short glance at the other improvements of *numbers*, *stile*, *&c.* necessarily connected with it, gives him the opportunity of going off easily into a subject of near affinity with this, *viz.* the *Roman satiric piece*; which was indeed a species of tragedy, but of so extraordinary a composition, as to require a set of rules, and instructions, peculiar to itself. A point, in which they agreed, but which was greatly misunderstood or ill-

Sic priscae motumque et luxuriem addidit arti
Tibicen, traxitque vagus per pulpita vestem : 215
Sic etiam fidibus voces crevere severis,
Et tulit eloquium insolitum facundia praeceps ;
Utiliumque sagax rerum, et divina futuri,
Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis.
Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum, 220
Mox etiam agrestis Satyros nudavit, et asper
Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit : eo quod
Inlecebris erat et grata novitate morandus
Spectator functusque sacris, et potus, et exlex.
Verum ita risores, ita commendare dicacis 225
Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere seria ludo ;
Ne quicunque Deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros
Regali conspectus in auro nuper et ostro,

COMMENTARY.

observed by his countrymen, was the kind of verse or measure employed in them. This therefore, by a disposition of the most beautiful method, he reserves for a consideration by itself, having, first of all, delivered such rules, as seemed necessary about those points, in which they essentially differed. He explains then [from v. 220 to 225] the *use and end* of the *satires*, shewing them to be designed for the exhilaration of the rustic youth, on their solemn festivities, after the exhibition of the graver, tragic shews. But, 2. To convert, as far as was possible, what was thus a necessary sacrifice to the taste of the multitude into a tolerable entertainment for the better sort, he lays down [from v. 225 to 240] the exactest description or idea of this sort of poem ; by means of which he instructs us in the due temperature

Migret in obscuras humili sermone tabernas:
Aut, dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captet:
Effutire levis indigna tragoedia versus, 231
Ut festis matrona moveri jussa diebus,
Intererit Satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.
Non ego inornata et dominantia nomina solum
Verbaque, Pisones, Satyrorum scriptor amabo:
Nec sic enitar tragico differre colori; 236
Ut nihil intersit, Davusne loquatur et audax
Pythias emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,
An custos famulusque Dei Silenus alumni.
Ex noto fictum carmen sequar: ut sibi quivis 240
Speret idem; sudet multum, frustraque laboret
Ausus idem: tantum series juncturaque pollet:
Tantum de medio sumtis accedit honoris.
Silvis deducti caveant, me judice, Fauni,
Ne velut innati triviis, ac pene forenses, 245
Aut nimium teneris juvenentur versibus umquam,
Aut inmunda crepent ignominiosaque dicta.
Offenduntur enim, quibus est equus, et pater, et res;
Nec, si quid fricti ciceris probat et nucis emtor,
Aequis accipiunt animis, donantve corona. 250

COMMENTARY.

and decorum of the satyric style. 3. Lastly, [from v. 240 to 251] he directs to the choice of proper subjects, and defines the just character of those principal and so uncommon *personages* in this drama, the *satyrs* themselves. This being premised, he considers, as was observed, what belongs in common to this with the regular tragedy [from v. 251 to 275] the laws and use of the

Syllaba longa brevi subjecta, vocatur Iambus,
Pes citus: unde etiam Trimetris adcrescere jussit
Nomen Iambeis, cum senos redderet ictus
Primus ad extremum similis sibi: non ita pridem,
Tardior ut paulo graviorque veniret ad auris, 255
Spondeos stabilis in jura paterna recepit
Commodus et patiens: non ut de sede secunda
Cederet, aut quarta socialiter. Hic et in Accî
Nobilibus Trimetris apparet rarus, et Ennî.
In scenam missus cum magno pondere versus, 260
Aut operae celeris nimium curaque carentis,
Aut ignoratae premit artis crimine turpi.
Non quivis videt immodulata poëmata judex:
Et data Romanis venia est indigna poetis.
Idcircone vager, scribamque licenter? ut omnis 265
Visuros peccata putem mea; tutus et intra
Spem veniae cautus? vitavi dehique culpam,
Non laudem merui. Vos exemplaria Graeca
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.
At vestri proavi Plautinos et numeros et 270
Laudavere sales; nimium patienter utrumque
(Ne dicam stulte) mirati: si modo ego et vos

COMMENTARY.

*iambic* foot; reproving, at the same time, the indolence or ill-taste of the Roman writers in this respect, and sending them for instruction to the Grecian models.

Having introduced his critique on the *stage-music*, and *satyric drama*, with some account of the rise and progress of *each*, the poet very properly concludes this whole part [from v. 275 to 295] with a short, incidental

Scimus inurbanum lepido seponere dicto,
Legitimumque sonum digitis callemus et aure.
Ignotum tragicae genus invenisse Camenae 275
Dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poëmata Thespis
Qui canerent agerentque, peruncti faecibus ora.
Post hunc personae pallaeque repertor honestae
Aeschylos et modicis instravit pulpita tignis,
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.
Successit vetus his Comoedia, non sine multa 281
Laude: sed in vitium libertas excidit, et vim
Dignam lege regi: lex est accepta; chorusque
Turpiter obticuit, sublato jure nocendi.
Nil intentatum nostri liquere poëtae: 285
Nec minimum meruere decus, vestigia Graeca
Ausi deserere, et celebrare domestica facta,
Vel qui Praetextas, vel qui docuere Togatas.
Nec virtute foret clarisve potentius armis, 289

COMMENTARY.

history of the principal improvements of the *Greek tragedy and comedy*; which was artfully contrived to insinuate the defective state of the Roman drama, and to admonish his countrymen, how far they had gone, and what yet remained to complete it. And hence with the advantage of the easiest transition he slides into the last part of the epistle; the design of which, as hath been observed, was to reprove an *incorrectness and want of care* in the Roman writers. For, having just observed their *defect*, he goes on, in the remaining part of the epistle, to sum up the several causes, which seem to have produced it. And this gives him the opportunity,

Quam lingua, Latium; si non offenderet unum-
Quemque poëtarum limae labor et mora. Vos, ô
Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non
Multa dies et multa litura coërcuit, atque
Praesectum decies non castigavit ad unguem.
Ingenium misera quia fortunatius arte 295
Credit, et excludit sanos Helicone poëtas
Democritus; bona pars non unguis ponere curat,
Non barbam: secreta petit loca, balnea vitat.
Nanciscetur enim pretium nomenque poëtae,
Si tribus Anticyris caput insanabile numquam 300
Tonsori Licino conmiserit. O ego laevus,
Qui purgor bilem sub verni temporis horam?
Non alius faceret meliora poëmata; verum

COMMENTARY.

under every head, of prescribing the proper remedy for each, and of inserting such further rules and precepts for good writing, as could not so properly come in before. The whole is managed with singular address, as will appear from looking over particulars.

## PART III.

### A CARE AND DILIGENCE IN WRITING RECOMMENDED.

I. [from l. 295 to l. 323] THE poet ridicules that false notion, into which the Romans had fallen, that *poetry* and *possession* were nearly the same thing: that nothing more was required in a poet, than some extravagant starts and sallies of thought; that coolness and reflexion were inconsistent with his character, and that poetry was not to be scanned by the rules of sober sense. This they carried so far, as to affect the outward port and air of

Nil tanti est. ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum
Reddere quae ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi. 305
Munus et officium, nil scribens ipse, docebo;
Unde parentur opes: quid alat formetque poëtam;
Quid deceat, quid non; quo virtus, quo ferat error.
Scribendi recte, sapere est et principium et fons.
Rem tibi Socraticae poterunt ostendere chartae: 310
Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.
Qui didicit patriae quid debeat, et quid amicis;
Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hospes;
Quod sit conscripti, quod judicis officium; quae
Partes in bellum missi ducis; ille profecto 315
Reddere personae scit convenientia cuique.
Respicere exemplar vitae morumque jubebo
Doctum imitatorem, et vivas hinc ducere voces.

COMMENTARY.

madness, and, upon the strength of that appearance, to set up for wits and poets. In opposition to this mistake, which was one great hindrance to critical correctness, he asserts *wisdom and good sense to be the source and principle of good writing:* for the attainment of which he prescribes, 1. [from v. 310 to 312] A careful study of the Socratic, that is, moral wisdom: and, 2. [from v. 312 to 318] A thorough acquaintance with human nature, *that great exemplar of manners*, as he finely calls it, or, in other words, a wide extensive view of real, practical life. The joint direction of these two, as means of acquiring moral knowledge, was perfectly necessary. For the former, when alone, is apt to grow abstracted and unaffecting: the latter, uninstructing and superficial. The philosopher talks without experience, and

Interdum speciosa locis, morataque recte
Fabula, nullius veneris, sine pondere et arte, 320
Valdius oblectat populum, meliusque moratur,
Quam versus inopes rerum, nugaeque canorae.
Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo
Musa loqui, praeter laudem, nullius avaris.
Romani pueri longis rationibus assem 325
Discunt in partis centum diducere. Dicas
Filius Albini, si de quincunce remota est
Uncia, quid superet. poterat dixisse, triens? Eu!
Rem poteris servare tuam. Redit uncia: quid fit?

COMMENTARY.

the man of the world without principles. United they supply each other's defects; while the man of the world borrows so much of the philosopher, as to be able to adjust the several sentiments with precision and exactness; and the philosopher so much of the man of the world as to copy the manners of life (which we can only do by experience) with truth and spirit. Both together furnish a thorough and complete comprehension of human life; which manifesting itself in the *just*, and *affecting*, forms that exquisite degree of perfection in the character of the dramatic poet; the want of which no warmth of genius can atone for, or excuse. Nay such is the force of this nice adjustment of *manners* [from l. 319 to 323] that, where it has remarkably prevailed, the success of a play hath sometimes been secured by it, without one single excellence or recommendation besides.

II. He shews [from l. 323 to 333] another cause of their incorrectness and want of success, in any degree, answering to that of the Greek writers, to have been the

Semis. An haec animos aerugo et cura peculî 330
Cum semel inbuerit, speramus carmina fingi
Posse linenda cedro, et levi servanda cupresso?
Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poëtae;
Aut simul et jocunda et idonea dicere vitae.
Quicquid praecipies, esto brevis: ut cito dicta 335
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.
[Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat.]
Ficta voluptatis causa sint proxima veris:
Ne, quodcumque volet, poscat sibi fabula credi;
Neu pransae Lamiae vivum puerum extrahat alvo.

COMMENTARY.

low and illiberal education of the Roman youth; who, while the Greeks were taught to open all their mind to glory, were cramped in their genius by the rust of gain, and, by the early infusion of such sordid principles, became unable to project a great design, or with any care and mastery to complete it.

III. A third impediment to their success in poetry [from l. 333 to 346] was their inattention to the *entire* scope and purpose of it, while they contented themselves with the attainment of one only of the two great ends, which are proposed by it. For the double design of poetry being to *instruct* and *please*, the full aim and glory of the art cannot be attained without uniting them both: that is, *instructing* so as to *please*, and *pleasing* so as to *instruct*. Under either head of *instruction* and *entertainment* the poet, with great address, insinuates the main art of each kind of writing, which consists, 1. in *instructive* or *didactic poetry* [from v. 335 to 338] in the *conciseness of the precept*: and, 2. in works of *fancy* and *entertainment*

Centuriae seniorum agitant expertia frugis: 341
Celsi praetereunt austera poëmata Ramnes.
Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci,
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.
Hic meret aera liber Sosiis, hic et mare transit, 345
Et longum noto scriptori prorogat aevum.
Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignovisse velimus:
Nam neque chorda sonum reddit, quem volt manus et mens;
Poscentique gravem persaepe remittit acutum: 349
Nec semper feriet, quodcumque minabitur, arcus.
Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura. quid ergo est?
Ut scriptor si peccat idem librarius usque,
Quamvis est monitus, venia caret; ut citharoedus

COMMENTARY.

[l. 338 to 341] in *probability of fiction.* But both these [l. 341 to 347] must concur in a just piece.

But here the bad poet objects the difficulty of the terms, imposed upon him, and that, if the critic looked for all these requisites, and exacted them with rigour, it would be impossible to satisfy him: at least it was more likely to discourage, than quicken, as he proposed, the diligence of writers. To this the reply is [from l. 347 to 360] that he was not so severe, as to exact a faultless and perfect piece: that some inaccuracies and faults of less moment would escape the most cautious and guarded writer; and that, as he should contemn a piece, that was generally bad, notwithstanding a few beauties, he could,

Ridetur, chorda qui semper oberrat eadem : 350
Sic mihi qui multum cessat, fit Choerilos ille,
Quem bis terve bonum, cum risu miror; et idem
Indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.
Verum operi longo fas est obrepere somnum. 360
Ut pictura, poësis: erit quae, si propius stes,
Te capiat magis; et quaedam, si longius abstes:
Haec amat obscurum; volet haec sub luce videri,
Judicis argutum quae non formidat acumen:
Haec placuit semel; haec decies repetita placebit.

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on the contrary, admire a work, that was generally good, notwithstanding a few faults. Nay, he goes on [from l. 360 to 366] to observe in favour of writers, against their too rigorous censurers, that what were often called faults, were really not so: that some parts of a poem ought to be less *shining*, or less *finished*, than others; according to the light, they were placed in, or the distance, from which they were viewed; and that, serving only to connect and lead to others of greater consequence, it was sufficient if they pleased once, or did not displease, provided that those others would please on every review. All this is said agreeably to *nature*, which does not allow every part of a subject, to be equally susceptible of ornament; and to the *end of poetry*, which cannot so well be attained, without an inequality. The allusions to painting, which the poet uses, give this truth the happiest illustration.

Having thus made all the reasonable allowances, which a writer could expect, he goes on to inforce the general instruction of this part, *viz. a diligence in writing*,

O major juvenum, quamvis et voce paterna 366
Fingeris ad rectum, et per te sapis; hoc tibi dictum
Tolle memor: certis medium et tolerabile rebus
Recte concedi: consultus juris, et actor
Causarum mediocris; abest virtute diserti 370
Messallae, nec scit quantum Cascellius Aulus;
Sed tamen in pretio est: mediocribus esse poëtis
Non homines, non Dî, non concessere columnae.
Ut gratas inter mensas symphonia discors,
Et crassum unguentum, et Sardo cum melle papaver 375
Offendunt; poterat duci quia coena sine istis:
Sic animis natum inventumque poëma juvandis,
Si paulum summo decessit, vergit ad imum.
Ludere qui nescit, campestribus abstinet armis;
Indoctusque pilae, discive, trochive, quiescit; 380

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by shewing [from l. 366 to 379] that a *mediocrity*, however tolerable, or even commendable, it might be in other arts, would never be allowed in this: for which he assigns this very obvious and just reason; that, as the main end of poetry is to *please*, if it did not reach that point (which it could not do by stopping ever so little on this side excellence) it was, like indifferent music, indifferent perfumes, or any other indifferent thing, which we can do without, and whose end should be to please, *offensive and disagreeable*, and for want of being very good, absolutely and insufferably bad. This reflexion leads him with great advantage [from l. 379 to 391] to the general conclusion in view, *viz.* that as

Ne spissae risum tollant inpune coronae:
Qui nescit versus, tamen audet fingere. Quid nî?
Liber et ingenuus; praesertim census equestrem
Summam nummorum, vitioque remotus ab omni.
Tu nihil invita dices faciesve Minerva: 385
Id tibi judicium est, ea mens, si quid tamen olim
Scripseris, in Maecî descendat judicis auris,
Et patris, et nostras; nonumque prematur in annum,
Membranis intus positis. Delere licebit
Quod non edideris: nescit vox missa reverti. 390
Silvestris homines sacer interpresque Deorum
Caedibus et victu foedo deterruit Orpheus;
Dictus ob hoc lenire tigris rabidosque leones.
Dictus et Amphion, Thebanae conditor arcis,
Saxa movere sono testudinis, et prece blanda 395
Ducere quo vellet. fuit haec sapientia quondam,
Publica privatis secernere, sacra profanis;
Concubitu prohibere vago; dare jura maritis;
Oppida moliri; leges incidere ligno.
Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque 400
Carminibus venit. post hos insignis Homerus

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none but excellent poetry will be allowed, it should be a warning to writers, how they engage in it without abilities; or publish without severe and frequent correction. But to stimulate the poet, who, notwithstanding the allowances already made, might be something struck with this last reflexion, he flings out [from l. 391 to 408] into a fine encomium, on the dignity and

Tyrtaeusque mares animos in Martia bella
Versibus exacuit. dictae per carmina sortes,
Et vitae monstrata via est, et gratia regum
Pieriis tentata modis, ludusque repertus, 40
Et longorum operum finis; ne forte pudori
Sit tibi Musa lyrae solers, et cantor Apollo.
Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,
Quaesitum est. Ego nec studium sine divite vena,
Nec rude quid possit video ingenium: alterius sic

COMMENTARY.

excellence of the art itself, by recounting its ancie
honours. This encomium, besides its great usefulne
in invigorating the mind of the poet, has this furth
view, to recommend and revive, together with its h
nours, the office of ancient poesy; which was employe
about the noblest and most important subjects; th
sacred source, from whence those honours were derive

From this transient view of the several species
poetry, terminating, as by a beautiful contrivance it
made to do, in the *Ode*, the order of his ideas carri
him into some reflexions on the power of genius (whi
so essentially belongs to the lyric Muse) and to sett
thereby a point of criticism, much controverted amo
the ancients, and on which a very considerable stre
would apparently be laid. For, if after all, so much
and care and caution be demanded in poetry, what b
comes of genius, in which alone it had been thought
consist? would the critic insinuate, that good poe
can be the sole effect of art, and go so far, in oppositi
to the reigning prejudice, as to assert nature to be of
force at all? This objection, which would be apt

Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amice. 411
Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,
Multa tulit fecitque puer; sudavit et alsit;
Abstinuit venere et vino. qui Pythia cantat
Tibicen, didicit prius, extimuitque magistrum. 415
Nec satis est dixisse, Ego mira poëmata pango:
Occupet extremum scabies: mihi turpe relinqui est,
Et, quod non didici, sane nescire fateri.
Ut praeco, ad merces turbam qui cogit emendas;
Adsentatores jubet ad lucrum ire poëta 420
Dives agris, dives positis in foenore nummis.
Si vero est, unctum qui recte ponere possit,
Et spondere levi pro paupere, et eripere artis

COMMENTARY.

[illegible] to the general scope and tenor of the epistle, as [illegible] turned principally on *art* and *rules* without insist- [illegible] much on natural *energy*, the poet obviates at once [illegible] v. 408 to 419] by reconciling two things which [illegible] held, it seems, incompatible, and demanding in [illegible] poet, besides the fire of real genius, all the labour [illegible] discipline of art. But there is one thing still want- [illegible] The poet may be excellently formed by nature, [illegible] accomplished by art, but will his own judgment be [illegible] guide, without assistance from others? will [illegible] partiality of an author for his own works some- [illegible] prevail over the united force of rules and genius, [illegible] call in a fairer and less interested guide? [illegible] it will: and therefore the poet, with the ut- [illegible] propriety, adds [from v. 419 to 450] as a necessary [illegible] this instructive monition to his brother poets.

Litibus inplicitum ; mirabor, si sciet inter-
Noscere mendacem verumque beatus amicum. 425
Tu seu donaris seu quid donare voles cui ;
Nolito ad versus tibi factos ducere plenum
Laetitiae ; clamabit enim, Pulchre, bene, recte !
Pallescet ; super his etiam stillabit amicis
Ex oculis rorem ; saliet ; tundet pede terram. 430
Ut qui conducti plorant in funere, dicunt
Et faciunt prope plura dolentibus ex animo : sic
Derisor vero plus laudatore movetur.
Reges dicuntur multis urguere culullis,
Et torquere mero quem perspexisse laborant 435
An sit amicitia dignus. si carmina condes,
Nunquam te fallant animi sub volpe latentes.
Quintilio si quid recitares : Corrige sodes
Hoc, aiebat, et hoc. melius te posse negares,
Bis terque expertum frustra ? delere jubebat, 440

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some directions concerning the choice of a prudent and sincere friend, whose unbiassed sense might at all times correct the prejudices, indiscretions, and oversights of the author. And to impress this necessary care, with greater force, on the poet, he closes the whole with shewing the dreadful consequences of being imposed upon in so nice an affair; representing, in all the strength of colouring, the picture of a bad poet, infatuated, to a degree of madness, by a fond conceit of his own works, and exposed thereby (so important had been the service of timely advice) to the contempt and scorn of the public.

Et male ter natos incudi reddere versus.
Si defendere delictum, quam vertere, malles;
Nullum ultra verbum, aut operam insumebat inanem,
Quin sine rivali teque et tua solus amares.
Vir bonus et prudens versus reprehendet inertis;
Culpabit duros; incomptis adlinet atrum 445
Transverso calamo signum; ambitiosa recidet
Ornamenta; parum claris lucem dare coget;
Arguet ambigue dictum; mutanda notabit;
Fiet Aristarchus; non dicet, Cur ego amicum 450
Offendam in nugis? Hae nugae seria ducent
In mala derisum semel, exceptumque sinistre.
Ut mala quem scabies aut morbus regius urguet,
Aut fanaticus error, et iracunda Diana;
Vesanum tetigisse timent fugiuntque poëtam, 455
Qui sapiunt: agitant pueri, incautique sequuntur.
Hic, dum sublimis versus ructatur, et errat,
Si veluti merulis intentus decidit auceps

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And now, an unity of design in this epistle, and the pertinent connection of its several parts being, it is presumed, from this method of illustration, clearly and indisputably shewn, what must we think of the celebrated FRENCH interpreter of Horace, who, after a studied translation of this piece, supported by a long, elaborate commentary, minutely condescending to scrutinize each part, could yet perceive so little of its true form and character, as to give it for his summary judgment, in conclusion; "*Comme il* [Horace] *ne travailloit*

In puteum, foveamve; licet, Succurrite, longum
Clamet, io cives: non sit qui tollere curet. 460
Si curet quis opem ferre, et demittere funem;
Quî scis, an prudens huc se projecerit, atque
Servari nolit? dicam: Siculique poëtae
Narrabo interitum. Deus immortalis haberi
Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Aetnam
Insiluit. sit jus, liceatque perire poëtis. 466
Invitum qui servat, idem facit occidenti.
Nec semel hoc fecit; nec si retractus erit jam,
Fiet homo, et ponet famosae mortis amorem.
Nec satis adparet, cur versus factitet; utrum 470
Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triste bidental
Moverit incestus: certe furit, ac velut ursus
Objectos caveae valuit si frangere clathros,
Indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus.
Quem vero arripuit, tenet, occiditque legendo, 475
Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, hirudo.

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*pas à cela de suite et qu'il ne gardoit d'autre ordre que celui des matieres que le hazard lui donnoit à lire et à examiner, il est arrivé delà qu'* "IL N' Y A AUCUNE METHODE NI AUCUNE LIAISON DE PARTIES DANS CE TRAITE', *qui même n'a jamais été achevé, Horace n' ayant pas eu le tems d'y mettre la derniere main, ou, ce qui est plus vraisemblable, n'ayant pas voulu s'en donner la peine.*" [M. Dacier's Introd. remarks to the art of poetry.] The softest thing that can be said of such a critic, is, that he well deserves the censure, he so justly applied to the great Scaliger, S'IL L'AVOIT BIEN ENTENDU, IL LUI AUROIT RENDU PLUS DE JUSTICE, ET EN AUROIT PARLE' PLUS MODESTEMENT.

# NOTES

ON THE

# ART OF POETRY.

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THE text of this epistle is given from Dr. BENTLEY's edition, except in some few places, of which the reader is advertized in the notes. These, that they might not break in too much on the thread of the Commentary, are here printed by themselves. For the rest, let me apologize with a great critic: *Nobis viri docti ignoscent, si hæc fusius: præsertim si cogitent, veri critici esse, non literulam alibi ejicere, alibi innocentem syllabam et quæ nunquàm male merita de patria fuerit, per jocum et ludum trucidare et configere; verùm recte de autoribus et rebus judicare, quod et solidæ et absolutæ eruditionis est.* HEINSIUS.

1. HUMANO CAPITI, &c.] It is seen, in the comment, with what elegance this first part [to v. 89] is made preparatory to the main subject, agreeably to the genius of the Epistle. But elegance, in

good hands, always implies *propriety*; as is the case here. For the critic's rules must be taken either, 1. from the *general* standing laws of composition; or, 2. from the peculiar ones, appropriated to the *kind*. Now the direction to be fetched from the former of these sources will of course *precede*, as well on account of its superior dignity, as that the mind itself delights to descend from *universals* to the consideration of *particulars*. Agreeably to this rule of nature, the poet, having to correct, in the Roman drama, these three points, 1. a misconduct in the disposition; 2. an abuse of language; and 3. a disregard of the peculiar characters and *colorings* of its different species, hath chosen to do this on principles of universal nature; which, while they include the case of the drama, at the same time extend to poetic composition at large. These prefatory, universal observations being delivered, he then proceeds, with advantage, to the *second* source of his art, viz. the consideration of the laws and rules peculiar to the *kind*.

9. — PICTORIBUS ATQUE POETIS — QUIDLIBET AUDENDI SEMPER FUIT AEQUA POTESTAS.] The *modern* painter and poet will observe that this aphorism comes from the mouth of an objector.

14. INCEPTIS GRAVIBUS, &c.] These preparatory observations concerning the laws of poetic composition at large have been thought to glance

more *particularly* at the epic poetry: Which was not improper: For, 1. The *drama*, which he was about to criticize, had its rise and origin from the *epos*. Thus we are told by the great critic, that Homer was the first who *invented dramatic imitations*, μόνος — ὅτι μιμήσεις δραμαϊικὰς ἐποίησε. And to the same purpose Plato: ἔοικε μὲν τῶν καλῶν ἀπάντων τούτων τῶν τραγικῶν πρῶτος διδάσκαλος καὶ ἡγεμὼν γενέσθαι [Ὅμηρος.] *De Rep.* l. x. Hence, as our noble critic observes, "There was no more "left for tragedy to do after him, than to erect a "stage, and draw his dialogues and characters into "scenes; turning in the same manner upon one "principal action or event, with regard to place "and time, which was suitable to a real spectacle." [*Characterist.* vol. i. p. 198.] 2. The several censures, here pointed at the epic, would bear still more directly against the tragic poem; it being more glaringly inconsistent with the genius of the *drama* to admit of foreign and digressive ornaments, than of the extended, episodical *epopœia*. For both these reasons it was altogether pertinent to the poet's purpose, in a criticism on the *drama*, to expose the vicious practice of the *epic* models. Though, to preserve the unity of his piece, and for the reason before given in note on v. 1. he hath artfully done this under the cover of *general* criticism.

19. SED NUNC NON ERAT HIS LOCUS.] If one was to apply this observation to our dramatic writ-

ings, I know of none which would afford pleasanter instances of the absurdity, here exposed, than the famous ORPHAN of Otway. Which, notwithstanding its real beauties, could hardly have taken so prodigiously, as it hath done, on our stage, if there were not somewhere a defect of *good taste* as well as of *good morals*.

23. DENIQUE SIT QUIDVIS: SIMPLEX DUNTAXAT ET UNUM.] Is not it strange that he, who delivered this rule in form, and, by his manner of delivering it, appears to have laid the greatest stress upon it, should be thought capable of paying no attention to it himself, in the conduct of this epistle?

25—28. BREVIS ESSE LABORO, OBSCURUS FIO; SECTANTEM LENIA NERVI DEFICIUNT ANIMIQUE: PROFESSUS GRANDIA TURGET: SERPIT HUMI TUTUS NIMIUM TIMIDUSQUE PROCELLAE.] If these characters were to be exemplified in our own poets, of reputation, the *first*, I suppose, might be justly applied to Donne; the *second*, to Parnell; the *third*, to Thomson; and the *fourth*, to Addison. As to the two following lines:

*Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,*
*Delphinum silvis adpingit, fluctibus aprum:*

they are applicable to so many of our poets, that, to keep the rest in countenance, I will but just mention Shakespear himself; who, to enrich his scene with that *variety*, which his exuberant genius

so largely supplied, hath deformed his best plays with these *prodigious* incongruities.

29. QUI VARIARE CUPIT REM PRODIGIALITER UNAM, &c.] Though I agree with M. Dacier that *prodigialiter* is here used in a good sense, yet the word is so happily chosen by our *curious speaker* as to carry the mind to that fictitious monster, under which he had before allusively shadowed out the idea of absurd and inconsistent composition, in v. 1. The application, however, differs in this, that, whereas the monster, there painted, was intended to expose the extravagance of putting together *incongruous parts*, without any reference to a *whole*, this *prodigy* is designed to characterize a *whole*, but deformed by the ill-judged *position* of its *parts*. The former is like a monster, whose several members, as of right belonging to different animals, could, by no disposition, be made to constitute *one* consistent animal. The other, like a landskip, which hath no objects absolutely *irrelative*, or irreducible to a *whole*, but which a wrong position of the *parts* only renders *prodigious*. Send the *boar to the woods*; and the *dolphin to the waves*; and the painter might shew them both on the same canvass.

Each is a violation of the law of unity, and a real *monster*: the one, because it contains an assemblage of naturally *incoherent parts*; the other, because its parts, though in themselves *coherent*, are *misplaced*, and disjointed.

34. INFELIX OPERIS SUMMA: QUIA PONERE TOTUM NESCIET.] This observation is more particularly applicable to *dramatic* poetry, than to any other, an unity and integrity of action being of its very essence.—The poet illustrates his observation very happily in the case of *statuary*; but it holds of every other art, that hath a *whole* for its object. *Nicias*, the painter, used to say[a], "That the *subject* was to him, what the fable is to the poet." Which is just the sentiment of *Horace*, reversed. For by the *subject* is meant the whole of the painter's plan, the *totum*, which it will be impossible for those to express, who lay out their pains so solicitously in finishing single parts. Thus, to take an obvious example, the landskip-painter is to draw together, and form into *one* entire view, certain beautiful, or striking objects. This is his main care. It is not even essential to the merit of his piece, to labour, with extreme exactness, the *principal* constituent parts. But for the rest, a *shrub* or *flower*, a straggling *goat* or *sheep*, these may be touched very negligently. We have a great modern instance. Few painters have obliged us with *finer* scenes, or have possessed the art of combining *woods*, *lakes*, and *rocks*, into more agreeable pictures, than G. POUSSIN: Yet his *animals* are observed to be scarce worthy an ordinary artist. The use of these is *simply* to decorate the scene; and so their beauty depends, not on the truth and correct-

[a] See *Victor. Comm. in Dem. Phaler.* p. 73. *Florent.* 1594.

ness of the *drawing*, but on the elegance of their *disposition* only. For, in a landskip, the eye carelessly glances over the smaller parts, and regards them only in reference to the surrounding objects. The painter's labour therefore is lost, or rather misemployed, to the prejudice of the *whole*, when it strives to finish, so minutely, *particular* objects. If some great masters have shewn themselves ambitious of this fame, the objects, they have laboured, have been always such, as are most considerable in themselves, and have, besides, an *effect* in illustrating and setting off the entire scenery. It is chiefly in this view, that Ruisdale's *waters*, and Claude Lorain's *skies* are so admirable.

40.—CUI LECTA POTENTER ERIT RES.] *Potenter* i. e. *κατὰ δύναμιν*, *Lambin*: which gives a pertinent sense, but without justifying the expression. The learned editor of Statius proposes to read *pudenter*, a word used by Horace on other occasions, and which suits the meaning of the place, as well. A similar passage in the epistle to Augustus adds some weight to this conjecture;

*nec meus audet*
REM *tentare* PUDOR, *quam vires ferre recusent.*

45. HOC AMET, HOC SPERNAT, PROMISSI CARMINIS AUCTOR—IN VERBIS ETIAM TENUIS CAUTUSQUE SERENDIS.] Dr. Bentley hath inverted the order of these two lines; not merely, as I conceive, without

sufficient reason, but in prejudice also to the scope and tenor of the poet's sense; in which case only I allow myself to depart from his text. The whole precept, on poetical distribution, is delivered, as of importance:

[*Ordinis haec virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor.*]

And such indeed it is: for, 1. It respects no less than the constitution of a *whole*, i. e. the reduction of a subject into one entire, consistent plan, the most momentous and difficult of all the offices of *invention*, and which is more immediately addressed, in the high and sublime sense of the word, to the POET. 2. 'Tis no trivial *whole*, which the Precept had in view, but, as the context shews, and as is further apparent from v. 150, where this topic is resumed and treated more at large, the *epos* and the *drama*: With what propriety then is a rule of such dignity inforced by that strong emphatic conclusion,

*Hoc amet, hoc spernat, promissi carminis auctor:*

*i. e.* "Be this rule held sacred and inviolate by him, "who hath projected and engaged in a work, de-"serving the appellation of a poem." Were the subject only the choice or invention of *words*, the solemnity of such an application must be ridiculous.

As for the construction, the commonest reader can find himself at no loss to defend it against the force of the Doctor's objections.

46. IN VERBIS ETIAM TENUIS, &c.] I have said, that these preparatory observations concerning an *unity* of design, the *abuse of language*, and the different *colourings* of the several species of poetry, whilst they extend to poetic composition at *large*, more particularly respect the case of the *drama*. The *first* of these articles has been illustrated in note on v. 34. The *last* will be considered in note v. 73. I will here shew the same of the *second*, concerning the *abuse of words*. For 1. the style of the drama representing real life, and demanding, on that account, a peculiar ease and familiarity in the language, the practice of coining *new* words must be more insufferable in *this*, than in any other species of poetry. The majesty of the epic will even sometimes require to be supported by this means, when the commonest ear would resent it, as downright affectation upon the stage. Hence the peculiar propriety of this rule to the dramatic writer,

*In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis.*

2. Next, it is necessary to keep the tragic style, though condescending, in some sort, to the familiar cast of conversation, from sinking beneath the dignity of the personages, and the solemnity of the representation. Now no expedient can more happily effect this, than what the poet prescribes concerning the *position* and *derivation* of words. For thus, the language, without incurring the odium of absolutely *invented* terms, sustains itself in a becoming stateliness and reserve, and, whilst it seems to stoop

to the level of conversation, artfully eludes the meanness of a trite, prosaic style.—There are wonderful instances of this management in the *Samson Agonistes* of Milton; the most artificial and highly finished, though for that reason, perhaps, the least popular and most neglected, of all the great poet's works.

47. DIXERIS EGREGIE, NOTUM SI CALLIDA VERBUM REDDIDERIT JUNCTURA NOVUM.—] This direction, about *disposing* of old words in such a manner as that they shall have the grace of *new* ones, is among the finest in the whole poem. And because Shakespear is he, of all our poets, who has most successfully practised this secret, it may not be amiss to illustrate the precept before us by examples taken from his writings.

But first it will be proper to explain the *precept* itself as given by Horace.

His critics seem not at all to have apprehended the force of it. Dacier and Sanadon, the two best of them, confine it merely to the formation of *compound words;* which, though *one* way in which this *callida junctura* shews itself, is by no means the whole of what the poet intended by it.

Their mistake arose from interpreting the word *junctura* too strictly. They suppose it to mean only the *putting together two words into one;* this being the most obvious idea we have of the *joining* of words. As if the most *literal* construction of

terms, according to their etymology, were always the most proper.

But Mr. Dacier has a reason of his own for confining the precept to this meaning. "The question, he says, is *de verbis serendis*; and therefore this *junctura* must be explained of *new* words, properly so called, as compound epithets are; and not of the grace of novelty which single words seem to acquire from the art of disposing of them."

By which we understand, that the learned critic did not perceive the scope of his author; which was manifestly this. "The invention of new terms, "says he, being a matter of much nicety, I had "rather you would contrive to employ known words "in such a way as to give them the effect of new "ones. 'Tis true, new words may sometimes be "necessary: And if so," &c. Whence we see that the line,

*In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis*

is not given here in form as the *general rule*, and the following line as the *example*. On the other hand, the rule is just mentioned carelessly and in passing, while the poet is hastening to another consideration of more importance, and which he even *opposes* to the former. "Instead of making new "words, you will do well to confine yourself merely "to old ones." Whatever then be the meaning of *junctura*, it is clear we are not to explain it of such words as exemplify the rule *de verbis serendis*.

But *junctura* will best be interpreted by the *usage* of Horace together with the *context*; 1. The word occurs only once more in this poet, and that in this very Epistle. It is where he advises a conduct with regard to the *subject-matter* of a poem, analogous to this concerning the *language* of it.

*Ex noto fictum carmen sequar* —
—— *tantum series juncturaque pollet.* v. 242.

Does he mean *the joining two subjects together* and combining them into *one*, so as that the *compound* subject shall be a *new* one? No such thing; "The subject, says he, shall be a *known*, an old one. Yet the *order, management, and contrivance* shall be such as to give it the air of an original fiction." Apply now this sense of *junctura* to words, and we are only told, that expression may be so *ordered* as to appear new, when the words, of which it is made up, are all known and common.

We have then the authority of the poet himself against the opinion of the French critic. But we have also the authority of his great imitator, or rather interpreter, Persius; who speaking of the language of his satires says, in allusion to this passage of Horace,

"*Verba togæ sequeris*, junctura callidus *acri*.
S. v. 14.

i. e. he took up with words of common and familiar use, but contrived to bring them into his style in such a manner as to give them the force, spirit, and energy of satiric expression."

2. Again: the context, as I observed, leads us to this meaning. The poet in v. 42. had been giving his opinion of the nature and effect of *method*, or orderly disposition in the conduct of a *fable*. The course of his ideas carries him to apply the observation to *words*; which he immediately does, only interposing v. 46. by way of introduction to it.

On the whole then *junctura* is a word of large and general import, and the same in *expression*, as *order or disposition*, in a *subject*. The poet would say, "Instead of framing new words, I recommend to you *any* kind of artful management by which you may be able to give a new air and cast to old ones."

Having now got at the true meaning of the precept, let us see how well it may be exemplified in the practice of Shakespear.

1. The first example of this *artful management*, if it were only in complaisance to former commentators, shall be that of *compound epithets*; of which sort are,

| | |
|---|---|
| *High-sighted Tyranny* | J. C. A. II. S. 2. |
| *A barren-spirited fellow* | A. IV. S. 1. |
| *An arm-gaunt steed* | A. C. A. I. S. 6. |
| *Flower-soft hands* | A. II. S. 3. |
| *Lazy-pacing clouds* | R. J. A. II. S. 2. |

and a thousand instances more in this poet. But this is a small part of his *craft*, as may be seen by what follows. For this end is attained,

2. *By another form of composition;* by compound *verbs* as well as compound *adjectives.*

To *candy* and *limn* are known words. The poet would express the contrary ideas, and he does it happily, by compounding them with our English negative *dis,*

——"The hearts
That pantler'd me at heels, to whom I gave
Their wishes, do *discandy,* melt their sweets
On blossoming Cæsar— A. C. A. IV. S. 9.

"That which is now a horse, ev'n with a thought
The rack *dislimns,* and makes it indistinct
As water is in water— A. C. A. IV. S. 10.

Though here we may observe, that for the readier acceptation of these compounds, he artfully subjoins the explanation.

3. By a liberty he takes of converting *substantives* into *verbs;*

A glass that *featur'd* them. Cymb. A. I. S. 1.
——Simon's weeping
Did *scandal* many a holy tear— A. III. S. 4.
Great griefs, I see, *medicine* the less. A. IV. S. 5.
——that kiss
I carried from thee, Dear; and my true lip
Hath *virgin'd* it e'er since— Cor. A. V. S. 3.

Or *verbs* into *substantives;*

——Then began
A stop i' th' chaser, a *Retire*— Cymb. A. V. S. 2.

——take
No stricter *render* of me— A. v. S. 3.
——handkerchief
Still waving, as the fits and *stirs* of's mind
Could best express— Cymb. A. I. S. 5.
——Sextus Pompeius
Hath giv'n the *dare* to Cæsar— A. C. A. I. S. 3.

4. By using *active* verbs neutrally,

——He hath fought to-day
As if a god in hate of mankind had
*Destroy'd*, in such a shape— A. C. A. IV. S. 6.
It is the bloody business, that *informs*
Thus to mine eyes— Macb. A. II. S. 2.

And *neutral* verbs actively,

——never man
Sigh'd truer breath; but that I see thee here,
Thou noble thing! more *dances* my rapt heart
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw
Bestride my threshold— Cor. A. IV. S. 4.
——like smiling Cupids,
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To *glow* the delicate cheeks which they did cool—
A. C. A. II. S. 3.

5. By converting *Adjectives* into Substantives.

——I do not think
So fair an *outward* and such stuff within
Endows a man but him— Cymb. A. I. S. 1.

6. By converting *Participles* into Substantives.

He would have well become this place, and grac'd
The *thankings* of a King— Cymb. A. v. S. 5.
The herbs, that have in them cold dew o' th' night,
Are *strewings* fitt'st for Graves— A. iv. S. 5.
——"Then was I as a tree
Whose boughs did bend with fruit. But, in one night,
A storm, or robbery, call it what you will,
Shook down my mellow *hangings*——
Cymb. A. iii. S. 3.
——Comes in my father,
And like the tyrannous *breathing* of the North
Shakes all our Buds from blowing——
Cymb. A. i. S. 5.

Which last instance I the rather give for the sake of proposing an emendation, which I think restores this fine passage to its Integrity. Before the late edition of Shakespear it stood thus,

And like the tyrannous breathing of the North
Shakes all our Buds from *growing*—

But the sagacious Editor saw that this reading was corrupt, and therefore altered the last word, *growing*, for unanswerable reasons, into *blowing*. See Mr. W's note opon the place. This slight change gives propriety and beauty to the passage, which before had no sort of meaning. Yet still all is not quite right. For, as the great Critic himself observes, "*Breathing* is not a very proper word to

express the rage and bluster of the north wind." Besides, one does not see how the *shaking* of these Buds is properly assign'd as the cause of their not blowing. The wind might shake off the *blossoms* of a fruit tree, i. e. the Buds when they were *full-blown*; but so long as the blossom lies folded up in the Bud, it seems secure from shaking. At least the *shaking* is not the *immediate* cause of the effect, spoken of; it is simply the *cold* of the north-wind that closes the Bud and keeps it from *blowing*. I am therefore tempted to propose another alteration of the text, and to read thus,

And like the tyrannous Breathing of the North
*Shuts* all our Buds from blowing—

If this correction be allowed, every thing is perfectly right. It is properly the *breathing*, the cold breath of the North, that shuts up the Buds when they are on the point of blowing. Whence the epithet *tyrannous* will be understood not as implying the idea of *blust'ring* (an idea indeed necessary if we retain the word *shakes)* but simply of *cruel*, the *tyranny* of this wind consisting in imprisoning the flower in its Bud and denying it the liberty of coming out into *Blossom*. The application too of this comparison, which required the change of *growing* into *blowing*, seems also to require the present alteration of *shakes*. For there was no manner of violence in *the father's* coming in upon the lovers. All the effect was, that his presence *restrained* them from that interchange of tender words, which was going to take place between them.

Thus far I had written in the last edition of these notes, and I, now, see no cause to doubt the *general* truth and propriety of this emendation. Only it occurs to me that, instead of SHUTS, the poet's own word might, perhaps, be CHECKS; as not only being more like in *sound* to the word *shakes*, but as coming nearer to the *traces* of the Letters. Besides, CHECKS gives the precise idea we should naturally look for, whether we regard the integrity of the *figure*—*tyrannous*—*checks*—, or the *thing* illustrated by it, viz. the abrupt coming in of the father, which was properly a *check* upon the lovers. Lastly, the expression is mended by this reading; for though we may be allowed to say *shuts from blowing*, yet *checks from blowing*, is easier and better English.

But to return to other Instances of the Poet's artifice in the management of *known* words. An apparent Novelty is sometimes effected

7. By turning *Participles* into Adverbs—

——*tremblingly* she stood
And on the sudden dropt— A. C. A. v. S. 5.

(One remembers the fine use Mr. Pope has made of this word in,

Or touch, if *tremblingly* alive all o'er—)

——But his flaw'd heart,
Alack, too weak the conflict to support,
'Twixt two extremes of Passion, joy and grief,
Burst *smilingly*— Lear, A. v. S. 8.

8. By *figurative terms;* i. e. by such terms as though common in the *plain*, are unusual in the figurative application.

——This common Body
Like to a vagabond flag, upon the stream,
Goes to, and back, *lacquying* the varying tide.
A. C. A. I. S. 5.

——When snow the Pasture *sheets*. ib.

To this head may be referred those innumerable terms in Shakespear which surprize us by their novelty; and which surprize us generally, on account of his preferring the *specific* idea to the *general* in the *subjects* of his Metaphors and the *circumstances* of his Description; an excellence in poetical expression which cannot be sufficiently studied. The examples are too frequent, and the thing itself too well understood, to make it necessary to enlarge on this article.

9. By *plain words*, i. e. such as are common in the figurative, uncommon in the literal acceptation.

*Disasters* vail'd the Sun— Ham. A. I. S. 1.

See the note on the place.

Th' *extravagant* and erring spirit hies
To his confine— ib.

——Can't such things be
And *overcome* us, like a Summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?—
Macb. A. III. S. 5.

10. By *transposition of words—unauthoriz'd use of terms—and ungrammatical construction.* Instances in all his plays, *passim.*

11. By *foreign idioms.* 'Tis true these are not frequent in Shakespear. Yet some Latinisms and e'en Grecisms we have. As

*Quenched of hope—* Cymb. A. v. S. 5.

And the like. But, which is more remarkable and served his purpose just as well, the writers of that time had so *latiniz'd* the English language; that the pure *English* Idiom, which Shakespear generally follows, has all the air of *novelty* which other writers are used to affect by a foreign phraseology.

The Reader sees, it were easy to extend this list of Shakespear's arts in the *Callida junctura* much farther. But I intended only a specimen of them; so much as might serve to illustrate the rule of Horace.

It is enough, that we have now a perfect apprehension of what is meant by CALLIDA JUNCTURA; And that it is, in effect, but another word for *Licentious Expression*: The use of which is, as Quintilian well expresses it, "*Ut quotidiani et semper eodem modo formati sermonis Fastidium levet, et nos à vulgari dicendi genere defendat.*" In short, the articles, here enumerated, are but so many ways of departing from the usual and simpler forms of speech, without neglecting too much the grace of

ease and perspicuity; In which well-tempered licence one of the greatest charms of all poetry, but especially of Shakespear's poetry, consists. Not that He was always and every where so happy, as in the instances given above. His expression sometimes, and by the very means, here exemplified, becomes *hard*, *obscure*, and *unnatural*. This is the extreme on the other side. But in general, we may say, that He hath either followed the direction of Horace very ably, or hath hit upon his Rule very happily.

We are not perhaps to expect the same ability, or good fortune from others. *Novelty* is a charm which nothing can excuse the want of, in works of entertainment. And the necessity of preventing the tedium arising from *hacknied expression* is so instant, that those, who are neither capable of prescribing to themselves this Rule of the *callida Junctura*, or of following it when prescribed by others, are yet inclined to ape it by some spurious contrivance; which being slight in itself will soon become liable to excess, and ridiculous by its absurdity. I have a remarkable instance in view, with which the reader will not be displeased that I conclude this long note.

About the middle of the 17th century one of the most common of these mimic efforts was the endless multiplication of *Epithets*; which soon made their poetry at once both stiff and nerveless. When frequent and excessive use had made this expedient ridiculous as well as cheap, they tried another, it's

very opposite *the rejection of all Epithets*, and so of languid poetry, made rigid Prose. This too had it's day. A dramatic Poet of that time has exposed these opposite follies with much humour. A character of sense and pleasantry is made to interrogate a Poetaster in the following manner.

GOLDSWORTH.

Master CAPERWIT, before you read, pray tell me,
Have your verses any ADJECTIVES?

CAPERWIT.

Adjectives! Would you have a poem without
Adjectives? They are the flow'rs, the grace of all our
language;
A well-chosen Epithete doth give new Soule
To fainting Poesie; and makes everye verse
A Bribe. With Adjectives we baite our lines,
When we do fish for Gentlewomen's loves,
And with their sweetness catch the nibbling ear
Of amorous Ladies: With the music of
These ravishing Nouns, we charm the silken tribe,
And make the Gallant melt with apprehension
Of the rare word: I will maintain 't (against
A bundle of Grammarians) in Poetry
The Substantive itself cannot subsist
Without an Adjective.

GOLDSWORTH.

But for all that,
These words would sound more full, methinks, that
are not

So larded; and, if I might counsel you,
You should compose a Sonnet, cleane without them.
A row of stately SUBSTANTIVES would march,
Like Switzers, and bear all the field before them;
Carry their weight, shew fair, like DEEDS enroll'd;
Not WRITS, that are first made, and after fill'd:
Thence first came up the title of BLANK verse.
You know, Sir, what *Blank* signifies? When the Sense
First fram'd, is tied with Adjectives, like Points,
And could not hold together, without wedges.
Hang 't, 'tis Pedanticke, vulgar Poetry.
Let children, when they versifye, sticke here
And there these pidling words, for want of matter;
POETS write masculine numbers.

CAPERWIT.

You have given me a pretty hint: 'Tis NEW.
I will bestow these verses on my footman;
They 'll serve a Chambermaid—

SHIRLEY'S *Chances, or Love in a Maze.*

54. CÆCILIO PLAUTOQUE DABIT ROMANUS, ADEMPTUM VIRGILIO VARIOQUE?] The question is but reasonable. Yet the answer will not be to the satisfaction of him that puts it. This humour, we may observe, holds here in England, as it did formerly at Rome; and will, I suppose, hold every-where, under the same circumstances. Cæcilius and Plautus were allowed to *coin*, but not Virgil and Varius. The same indulgence our authors had at the restoration of letters; but

it is denied to our present writers. The reason is plainly this. While arts are refining or reviving, the greater part are forced, and *all* are content to be *Learners*. When they are grown to their usual height, all affect to be *Teachers*. With this affectation, a certain envy, as the poet observes,

——*cur adquirere pauca,*
*Si possum*, invideor—

insinuates itself; which is for restraining the privileges of writers, to all of whom every reader is now become a Rival. Whereas men, under the first character of *Learners*, are glad to encourage every thing that makes for their instruction.

But whatever offence may be taken at this practice, good writers, as they safely may, should *dare* to venture upon it. A perfect language is a chimæra. In every state of it there will frequently be occasion, sometimes a necessity, to hazard a *new* word. And let not a great genius be discouraged, by the fastidious delicacy of his age, from a sober use of this privilege. Let him, as the poet directs,

Command *old* words, that long have slept, to wake,
Words, that wise BACON, or brave RALEGH spake;
Or bid the *new* be English ages hence,
For USE will father what's begot by SENSE.

This too was the constant language of ancient criticism. "Audendum tamen; namque, ut ait Cicero, etiam quæ primò dura visa sunt, usu molliuntur." *Quintil.* l. i. c. v.

70. MULTA RENASCENTUR, QUAE JAM CECIDERE.] This *revival* of *old* words is one of those *niceties* in composition, not to be attempted by any but great masters. It may be done two ways, 1. by restoring such terms, as are grown entirely obsolete; or, 2. by selecting out of those, which have still a currency, and are not quite laid aside, such as are most forcible and expressive. For so I understand a passage in Cicero, who urges this double use of old words, as an argument, to his orator, for the diligent study of the old Latin writers. His words are these: *Loquendi elegantia, quamquam expolitur scientiâ literarum, tamen augetur legendis orâtoribus* [*veteribus*] *et poetis: sunt enim illi veteres, qui ornare nondum poterant ea, quae dicebant, omnes prope præclare locuti—Neque tamen erit utendum verbis iis, quibus jam consuetudo nostra non utitur, nisi quando ornandi causâ, parcè, quod ostendam; sed usitatis ita poterit uti, lectissimis ut utatur is, qui in veteribus erit scriptis studiosè et multum volutatus.* [De Orat. l. iii. c. x.] These *choice* words amongst such as are still in *use*, I take to be those which are employed by the old writers in some peculiarly strong and energetic sense, yet so as with advantage to be copied by the moderns, without appearing barbarous or affected. [See HOR. lib. ii. ep. ii. v. 115.] And the reason, by the way, of our finding such words in the old writers of every language, may be this. When ideas are new to us, they strike us most forcibly; and we endeavour to express, not our *sense*

only, but our *sensations*, in the terms we use to explain them. The passion of wonder, which Philosophy would cure us of, is of singular use in raising the conception, and strengthening the expression of poets. And such is always the condition of old writers, when the arts are reviving, or but beginning to refine. The other use of old terms, *i. e.* when become *obsolete*, he says, must be made *parcè*, more sparingly. The contrary would, in oratory, be insufferable affectation. The rule holds in poetry, but with greater latitude; for, as he observes in another place, and the reason of the thing speaks, *hæc sunt Poetarum licentiæ liberiora.* [De Or. iii. 38.] But the elegance of the style, we are told, is increased both ways. The reason is, according to Quinctilian (who was perfectly of Cicero's mind in this matter. See l. x. c. i.) *Verba à vetustate repetita afferunt orationi majestatem aliquam non sine delectatione; nam et auctoritatem antiquitatis habent; et, quia intermissa sunt, gratiam novitati similem parant.* [Lib. i. c. vi. sub fin.] But this is not all: The riches of a language are actually increased by retaining its old words; and besides, they have often a greater real weight and dignity, than those of a more fashionable cast, which succeed to them. This needs no proof to such as are versed in the earlier writings in *any* language. A very capable judge hath observed it in regard of the most admired *modern* one: *Nous avons tellement laissé ce qui étoit au viel françois,*

*que nous avons laissé quant et quant la plus part de ce qu'il avoit de bon.* [Trait. préparatif à l' Apol. pour Herod. l. i. c. xxviii.] Or, if the reader requires a more decisive testimony, let him take it in the words of that curious speaker, Fenelon. *Nôtre langue manque d'un grand nombre de mots et de phrases. Il me semble même qu'on l'a genée et appauvrie depuis environ cent ans en voulant la purifier. Il est vrai qu'elle étoit encore un peu informe et trop verbeuse. Mais le vieux language se fait regretter, quand nous le retrouvons dans* MAROT, *dans* AMIOT, *dans le Cardinal d'*OSSAT, *dans les ouvrages les plus enjoues, et dans les plus serieux. Il y avoit je ne scai quoi de court, de näif, de vif et de passioné.* [Reflex. sur la Rhetorique, Amst. 1733. p. 4.] From these testimonies we learn the extreme value, which these masters of composition set upon their old writers; and as the reason of the thing justifies their opinions, we may further see the important use of some late attempts to restore a better knowledge of our *own*. Which I observe with pleasure, as the growing prevalency of a very different humour, first catched, as it should seem, from our commerce with the French models, and countenanced by the too scrupulous delicacy of some good writers amongst ourselves, had gone far towards unnerving the noblest modern language, and effeminating the public taste. This was not a little forwarded by, what generally makes its appearance at the same time, a kind of feminine curiosity in the choice of words; cautiously

avoiding and reprobating all such (which were not seldom the most expressive) as had been prophaned by a too vulgar use, or had suffered the touch of some other accidental taint. This ran us into periphrases and general expression; the peculiar bane of every polished language. Whereas the rhetorician's judgment here again should direct us: *Omnia verba (exceptis paucis parum verecundis) sunt alicubi optima; nam et humilibus interim et vulgaribus est opus, et quæ cultiore in parte videntur sordida, ubi res poscit, propriè dicuntur.* Which seems borrowed from Dionysius of Halicarnassus [περ. συνθεσ. § xii.] οὐδὲν ὅτω ταπεινὸν, ἢ ῥυπαρὸν, ἢ μιαρὸν, ἢ ἄλλην τινὰ δυσχέρειαν ἔχον ἔσεσθαί φημι λόγου μόριον, ᾧ σημαίνεταί τι σῶμα ἢ πρᾶγμα, ὃ μηδεμίαν ἕξει χώραν ἐπιτηδείαν ἐν λόγοις. However those two causes, "The rejection of old words, as barbarous, "and of many modern ones, as unpolite," had so exhausted the strength and stores of our language, that, as I observed, it was high time for some master-hand to interpose and send us for supplies to our old poets; which, there is the highest authority for saying, no one ever despised, but for a reason, not very consistent with his credit to avow: *rudem enim esse omnino in nostris poëtis aut inertissimæ segnitiæ est aut fastidii delicatissimi.* [Cic. de fin. l. i. c. ii.]

72. —SI VOLET USUS, &c.] *Consuetudo certissima loquendi magistra; utendumque planè ser-*

*mone, ut nummo, qui publica forma est.* [Quinctil. l. i. c. vi.] imitated from Horace. In *Lucian* too, we find it one of the charges brought against the Pedant, *Lexiphanes*, that *he clipped the standard* COIN *of the Greek language*—σπεδὴν ποιέμενος ὡς δή τι μέγα ὄν, εἴτι ξενίζοι καὶ τὸ καθεστηκὸς NOMIΣMA τῆς φωνῆς παρακόπτοι (c. 20.)

73. RES GESTAE, etc.] The purport of these lines [from v. 73 to 86] and their connexion with what follows, hath not been fully seen. They would express this general proposition, "That the "several kinds of poetry essentially differ from each "other, as may be gathered, not solely from their "different subjects, but their different measures; "which good sense, and an attention to the peculiar "natures of each, instructed the great inventors "and masters of them to employ." The use made of this proposition is to infer, "that therefore the "like attention should be had to the different species "of the *same kind* of poetry [v. 89, &c.] as in the "case of tragedy and comedy (to which the applica-"tion is made) whose peculiar differences and cor-"respondencies, as resulting from the natures of "each, should, in agreement to the universal law of "*decorum*, be exactly known and diligently observed "by the poet."

*Singula quæque locum teneant sortita decentem.*

v. 92.

But, there is a further propriety in this enumeration

of the several kinds of poetry, as addressed to the dramatic writer. He is not only to study, for the purposes here explained, the characteristic differences of either species of the drama: He must further be knowing in the other *kinds* of poetry, so as to be able, as the nature of his work shall demand, to adopt the genius of each, in its turn, and to transfer the graces of universal poetry into the drama. Thus, to follow the division here laid down, there will sometimes be occasion for the pomp and high *coloring* of the EPIC narration; sometimes for the plaintive softness and passionate inconnexion of the ELEGY: and the chorus, if characterized in the ancient manner, must catch the fiery, inraptured spirit of the ODE.

*Descriptas servare vices operumque colores,*
*Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque,* POETA *salutor?*

Hence is seen the truth of that remark, which there hath been more than once occasion to make, "That, "however general these prefatory instructions may "appear, they more especially respect the case of "the *drama*."

90. INDIGNATUR ITEM, etc.—COENA THYESTAE.] *Il met le souper de Thyeste pour toutes sortes de tragedies*, says M. Dacier; but why this subject was singled out, as the representative of the rest, is not explained by him. We may be sure, it was not taken up at random. The reason was, that the Thyestes of Ennius was peculiarly chargeable with

the fault, here censured: as is plain from a curious passage in the *Orator*; where Cicero, speaking of the loose numbers of certain poets, observes this, in particular, of the tragedy of Thyestes, *Similia sunt quædam apud nostros: velut in Thyeste,*

*Quemnam te esse dicam? qui tardâ in senectute.*

*et quæ sequuntur: quæ nisi cùm tibicen accesserit,* ORATIONI SUNT SOLUTÆ SIMILLIMA: which character exactly agrees to *this* of Horace, wherein the language of that play is censured, as flat and prosaic, and hardly rising above the level of ordinary conversation in comedy. This allusion to a particular play, written by one of their best poets, and frequently exhibited on the Roman stage, gives great force and spirit to the precept, at the same time that it exemplifies it in the happiest manner. It seems further probable to me, that the poet also designed an indirect compliment to *Varius*, whose Thyestes, we are told, [*Quinctil.* l. x, c. i.] *was not inferior to any tragedy of the Greeks.* This double intention of these lines well suited the poet's general aim, which is seen through all his critical works, of beating down the excessive admiration of the old poets, and of asserting the just honours of the modern. It may further be observed that the critics have not felt the force of the words *exponi* and *narrari* in this precept. They are admirably chosen to express the two faults condemned: the first implying a kind of pomp and ostentation in the language,

which is therefore improper for the low subjects of comedy: and the latter, as I have hinted, a flat, prosaic expression, not above the cast of a common *narrative*, and therefore equally unfit for tragedy. Nothing can be more rambling than the comment of Heinsius and Dacier on this last word.

94. IRATUSQUE CHREMES TUMIDO DILITIGAT ORE: ET TRAGICUS PLERUMQUE DOLET SERMONE PEDESTRI.] It may not be amiss to open a little more particularly the grounds of this criticism: which may best be done by a commentary on the following lines of the poet:

*Format enim natura priùs nos intùs ad omnem*
*Fortunarum habitum; juvat aut impellit ad iram;*
*Aut ad humum mœrore gravi deducit et angit:*
*Post effert animi motus interprete linguâ:*

To *draw* after the life, in any given conjuncture, the poet must recollect (which may easily be done by consulting with his own conscious experience) that *peculiar disposition* of mind, into which the speaker is, of necessity, carried by the circumstances of his situation. And the *sentiments*, which give the image of this peculiar disposition, are the genuine lineaments of the character intended.

But the *truth* of sentiment may be hurt or effaced by incongruous language, just as the exactest lineaments of a portrait are often disguised or lost under a vicious coloring. To *paint* then as well as draw after the truth, it is requisite that a further regard

be had to the *expression.* Which again is no great difficulty for the artist, the same common nature holding the torch to him, as before. For in entering into ourselves we find, that as the mind, in any supposed situation, gives birth to a *certain* set of conceptions and sentiments, correspondent to its true state, and expressive of it: so by attending to the *language,* in which those sentiments ordinarily manifest themselves, we easily perceive they take *one* style or manner of expression preferably to every other. For *expression,* where false art is not employed to distort it, gives the just image of our *sentiments;* just as *these,* when nature is not suppressed or counteracted, are ever the faithful representatives of the *manners.* They result, like the famous *Simulacra* of Epicurus, as by a secret destination, from their *original forms;* and are, *each,* the perfect copies of *other.* All which will be clearly understood by applying these general observations to the instances in view.

The passion of ANGER rouses all the native fire and energy of the soul. In this disorder, and, as it were, insurrection of the mental powers, our sentiments are strong and vigorous; nature prompting us to liberal and lofty conceptions of ourselves, and a superior disdainful regard of others. This again determines the *genius* of our language, which, to conform to such sentiments, must be bold and animated; breaking out into forcible imagery, and *swelling* in all the pomp of sounding epithets and

violent figures. And this even amidst the humbler concerns of private and inferior fortunes:

*Iratusque Chremes* TUMIDO DILITIGAT ORE.

In the passion of GRIEF, on the contrary, the reverse of this takes place. For the mind, oppressed and weighed down by its sorrows, sinks into a weak and timorous despondency; inclining us to submit, almost without resistance, to the incumbent affliction; or if we struggle at all with it, it is only to ease the labouring heart by putting forth some fruitless sighs and ineffectual complainings. Thus we find it represented by those perfect masters of simple nature, the Greek tragedians. So far are their sorrowing personages from entertaining any vigorous thoughts or manly resolutions, that they constantly languish into sad repinings at their present, and trembling apprehensions of future, misery.

When these sentiments come to express themselves in *words*, what can they be but the plainest and simplest which the language of the complainant furnishes? Such negligence, or more properly such dejection, of sorrow disposes the speaker to take up with terms as humble as his fortune. His feeble conception is not only unapt or unable to look out for fine words and painted phrases; but, if chance throw them in his way, he even rejects them as trappings of another condition, and which serves only to upbraid his present wretchedness. The pomp of numbers and pride of *poetic* expression are so little

his care, that it is well if he even trouble himself to observe the ordinary exactness of *mere prose*[a]. And this even where the height of rank and importance of affairs conspire to elevate the mind to more state and dignity.

*Et tragicus plerumque* DOLET SERMONE PEDESTRI.

Thus far the dramatic writer may inform himself by entering into his own *consciousness*, and observing the sure dictates of experience. For what concerns the successful application of this rule in *practice*, every thing, as is remarked below, [on v. 102.] must depend on the constitution of his own mind; which yet may be much assisted by the diligent study of those writers, who excel most in this way: in which class all agree to give the palm to EURIPIDES.

But here it may not be improper to obviate a common mistake that seems to have arisen from the too strict interpretation of the poet's Rule. *Tragic characters*, he says, *will generally express their sorrows in a prosaic language*. From this just observation, hastily considered and compared with the absurd practice of some writers, it hath been concluded, That what we call *pure Poetry*, the essence of which consists in bold figures and a lively imagery, hath no place on the Stage. It may not be sufficient to oppose to this notion the *practice* of the

[a] The reader may see a fine speech in the Cyropædia of Xenophon [l. iv.] where not so much as this is observed.

best poets, ancient and modern; for the question recurrs, how far that practice is to be justified on the principles of good criticism and common sense. To come then, *to the Reason of the thing.*

The capital rule in this matter is,

*Reddere Personæ—convenientia cuique.*

But to do this, the *Situation* of the persons, and the various *passions* resulting from such situation, must be well considered. Each of these has a *character* or turn of thinking peculiar to itself. But *all* agree in this property, that they occupy the whole attention of the speaker, and are perpetually offering to his mind a set of pictures or images, suitable to his state, and expressive of it. In these the tragic character of every denomination loves to indulge; as we may see by looking no farther than on what passes before us in common life, where persons, under the influence of any passion, are more eloquent and have a greater quickness at allusion and imagery, than at other times. So that to take from the speaker this privilege of representing such pictures or images is so far from consulting Nature, that it is, in effect, to overlook or reject one of her plainest lessons.

'Tis true, if *one* character is busied in running after the Images which Nature throws in the way only of some *other;* or if, in representing such images as are proper to the character, the Imagination is taken up in tracing minute resemblances and

amusing itself with circumstances that have no relation to the case in hand: then indeed the censure of these critics is well applied. It may be *fine poetry*, if you will, but very bad *dramatic writing*. But let the imagery be ever so great or splendid, if it be such only as the governing passion loves to conceive and paint, and if it be no further dilated on, and with no greater sollicitude and curiosity, than the natural working of the passion demands, the Drama is so far from rejecting such Poetry that it glories in it, as what is most essential to its true end and design.

*Ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur*
*Ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,*
*Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,*
*Ut magus* ——

An office, which the dramatic poet hath no means of sustaining but by that strong painting and forcible imagery, above described.

What seems to have given a colour to the opposite opinion, is the faulty practice which good critics have observed in the *French* tragedies, and in some of our own that have been formed upon their model. But the case is mistaken. It is not the *Poetry* of the French or English drama that deserves their censure, but its prolix and languid *Declamation*, neglecting passion for *sentiment*, or expressing *passion* in a calm circuit of words and without spirit. Even Mr. Addison's CATO, which from being immode-

rately extolled has had the usual fate of being as immoderately undervalued; is not to be censured for its abundance of poetry, but for its application of it in a way that hurts the *passion*. General sentiments, uncharacteristic imagery, and both drawn out in a spiritless, or, which comes to the same thing, a too curious expression, are the proper faults of this drama. What the critic of just taste demands in this fine tragedy, is even more poetry, but better applied and touched with more spirit.

Still, perhaps, we are but on the surface of this matter. The true ground of this mistaken Criticism, is, The Notion, that when the Hero is at the crisis of his fate, he is not at liberty to use Poetical, that is, highly figurative expression: but that the proper season for these things is when he has nothing else to do. Whereas the truth is just the contrary. The figures, when he is greatly agitated, come of themselves; and, suiting the grandeur and dignity of his situation, are perfectly natural. To use them in his cool and quiet moments, when he has no great interests to prosecute or extricate himself from, is directly against *Nature*. For, in this state of things, he must *seek* them, if he will have them. And when he has got them and made his best use of them, what do they produce? Not sublimity, but Bombast. For it is not the *figures*, but the suitableness to the *occasion*, that produces either. Not that I am ignorant that there are vices in the *formation* of figures, as well as in their application. But these vices go

under various other names. The *pure simple Bombast* (if I may be indulged so bold a catachresis) arises from putting figurative expression to an improper use. To give an instance of what I mean. TACITUS writes under one continued resentment at the degeneracy of his times, and speaking of some sumptuary Laws proposed by the Senate, in 2 *Ann.* c. 33, he says they decreed, *Ne Vestis Serica viros* FOEDARET. This became the dignity of his historic character and genius. But had his Contemporary, Suetonius, who wrote Chronicles in the spirit of our STOW and HOLINSHED, used the same language, it would have set his readers a laughing.

Not but figurative expression, even when *suitable* to the character, genius, and general subject of a writer, may still be *misplaced.* Thus, had Tacitus, speaking of the honours decreed to Tiberius on a certain occasion, said with his translator Gordon—*which of these he meant to accept or which to reject, the approaching issue of his days has* BURIED *in oblivion* —the *figure*, the reader sees, would have been miserably out of place; the conceit of the *burial* of his intentions, on the mention of his death, being even ridiculous. But the ridicule, we may be sure, falls on the translator only, and not on his great original, who expresses himself on this occasion, not only with propriety, but with the greatest simplicity —*quos omiserit receperitve* IN INCERTO *fuit ob propinquum vitæ finem.* Ann. l. vi. c. 45.

I have brought these instances to shew that *figurative expression* is not improper even in a fervent animated historian, on a *fit subject*, and in *due place*: much less should the tragic poet, when his characters are to be shewn in the conflict of the stronger passions, be debarred the use of it.

The short of the matter is, in one word, this. Civil Society first of all *tames us to humanity*, as Cicero expresses it; and, in the course of its discipline, brings us down to one dead level. Its effect is to make us all the same pliant, mimic, obsequious things; not unlike, in a word, (if our pride could overlook the levity of the comparison) what we see of trained Apes. But when the violent passions arise (as in the case of these Apes when the apples were thrown before them) this artificial discipline is all shaken off, and we return again to the free and ferocious state of Nature. And what is the expression of that state? It is (as we understand by experience) a free and fiery expression, all made up of bold metaphors and daring figures of Speech.

The conclusion is, that Poetry, *pure Poetry*, is the proper language of *Passion*, whether we chuse to consider it as ennobling, or debasing the human character.

There is, as I have said, an obvious distinction to be made (and to that the poet's rule, as explained in this note, refers) between the soft and tender, and the more vigorous passions. When the former prevail, the mind is in a weak languid state; and though

all allusion and imagery be not improper here, yet as that fire and energy of the soul is wanting, which gives a facility of ranging over our ideas and of seizing such as may be turned to any resemblance of our own condition, it will for that reason be less *frequent* in this state of the mind than any other. Such imagery, too, will for the same reason be less *striking*, because the same languid affections lead to, and make us acquiesce in a simpler and plainer expression. But universally in the stronger passions the *poetical character* prevails, and rises only in proportion to the force and activity of those passions.

To draw the whole then of what has been said on this subject into a standing RULE for the observance of the dramatic Poet.

"MAN is so formed that whether he be in joy, or "grief; in confidence or despair; in pleasure or pain; "in prosperity or distress; in security or danger; or "torn and distracted by all the various modifications "of Love, Hate, and Fear: The Imagination is "incessantly presenting to the mind an infinite "variety of images or pictures, conformable to his "Situation: And these Pictures receive their various "coloring from the habits, which his birth and "condition, his education, profession and pursuits "have induced. The *representation* of these is the "POETRY, and a *just* representation, in a great mea-"sure, the ART, of dramatic writing."

95. ET TRAGICUS PLERUMQUE DOLET SERMONE PEDESTRI.] Dr. Bentley connects this with the following line:

[*Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri*
*Telephus aut Peleus*

for the sake, as he says, of *preserving the opposition. In comœdiâ iratus Chremes tumido, in tragœdiâ Telephus pauper humili sermone utitur.* This is specious; but, if the reader attends, he will perceive, that the opposition is better preserved without his connection. For it will stand thus: The poet first asserts of comedy at large, *that it sometimes raises its voice,*

*Interdum tamen et vocem comœdia tollit.*

Next, he confirms this general remark, by appealing to a particular instance,

*Iratusque Chremes tumido dilitigat ore.*

Exactness of *opposition* will require the same method to be observed in speaking of *tragedy;* which accordingly is the case, if we follow the vulgar reading. For, first, it is said of *tragedy,* that, when grief is to be expressed, it generally condescends to an humbler strain,

*Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri.*

And then the general truth, as before, is illustrated by a particular instance,

*Telephus aut Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,*
*Projicit ampullas, &c.*

There is no absurdity, as the Doctor pretends, in taking *tragicus* for *tragœdiarum scriptor*. For the poet, by a common figure, is made to do that, which he represents his persons, as doing.

But this is not the whole, that will deserve the reader's regard in this place. A strict attention to the scope and turn of the passage [from v. 96 to 114] will lead him to conclude, 1. "That some real tra-"gedy of Telephus and Peleus was intended in v. "96, in which the characters were duly preserved "and set forth in proper language." This the opposition to the *Chremes* of Terence absolutely demands. Let us inquire what this might be. *Euripides*, we know, composed tragedies under these names; but it is unlikely, the poet should contrast the instance of a *Greek* tragedy to a *Latin* comedy. Nor need it be supposed. The subject was familiar to the Roman poets. For we find a *Telephus* ascribed to no less than three of them, *Ennius*, *Accius*, and *Nævius*[b]. One of these then I doubt not, is here intended. But the Roman, in those times, were little more than translations of the Greek plays. Hence it is most likely, that the tragedy of *Telephus* (and probably of *Peleus*, though we have not so direct authority for this) was, in fact, the tragedy of *Euripides*, translated into Latin, and accommodated to the Roman stage, by one of these writers. It remains only to enquire, if the *Telephus* itself of *Euripides* answered to this character. Which, I think, it manifestly did, from considering what

[b] See *Robert Stephens's Fragm. Vet. Latinorum.*

his enemy, the buffoon Aristophanes, hath said concerning it. Every body knows, that the BATRAXOI of this poet contains a direct satyr, and Burlesque upon *Euripides*. Some part of it is particularly levelled against his *Telephus*: whence we may certainly learn the objections, that were made to it. Yet the amount of them is only this, "That he had "drawn the character of *Telephus* in too many cir-"cumstances of distress and humiliation." His fault was, that he had represented him more like a beggar, than an unfortunate prince. Which, in more candid hands, would, I suppose, amount only to this, "That the poet had painted his distress in the most "natural, and affecting manner." He had stripped him of his royalty, and, together with it of the pomp and ostentation of the regal language, the very beauty, which Horace applauds and admires in his *Telephus*.

2. Next, I think it as clear from what follows, "That some real tragedy of *Telephus*, and *Peleus*, "was also glanced at, of a different stamp from the "other, and in which the characters were not sup-"ported by such propriety of language." Let the reader judge. Having quoted a *Telephus* and *Peleus*, as examples to the rule concerning the style of tragedy, and afterwards enlarged [from v. 98 to 103] on the reasons of their excellence, he returns, with an air of insult, to the same names, apostrophizing them in the following manner:

*Telephe, vel Peleu, male si mandata loquéris,*
*Aut dormitabo aut ridebo:*

But why this address to *characters*, which he had before alleged, as examples of true dramatical *drawing*? Would any tolerable writer, after having applauded Shakespear's King *Lear*, as an instance of the kingly character in distress, naturally painted, apostrophize it, with such pointed vehemence, on the contrary supposition? But let this pass. The Poet, as though a notorious violation of the critic's rules was to be thoroughly exposed, goes on, in the seven following lines, to search into the bottom of this affair, laying open the source and ground of his judgment; and concludes upon the whole,

*Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta,*
ROMANI TOLLENT EQUITESQUE PATRESQUE CACHINNUM.

Can any thing be plainer, than that this last line points at some well-known instance of a Latin play, which had provoked, upon this account, the contempt and laughter of the best judges? It may further be observed, that this way of understanding the passage before us, as it is more conformable to what is here shewn to be the general scope of the epistle, so doth it, in its turn, likewise countenance, or rather clearly shew, the truth and certainty of this method of interpretation.

99. NON SATIS EST PULCHRA, etc.] Dr. Bentley objects to *pulchra*, because this, he says, is a general term, including under it every species of beauty, and therefore that of *dulcis* or the *affecting*. But

the great critic did not sufficiently attend to the connexion, which, as F. Robortellus, in his paraphrase on the epistle, well observes, stands thus: "It is "not enough, that tragedies have that kind of beau-"ty, which arises from a pomp and splendor of dic-"tion, they must also be pathetic or affecting." *Objiciat se mihi hoc loco aliquis et dicat, si id fiat* [*i. e.* si projiciantur ampullæ] *corrumpi omnem venustatem et gravitatem poëmatis tragici, quod nihil nisi grande et elatum recipit. Huic ego ita respondendum puto, non satis esse, ut poëmata venusta sint et dignitatem suam servent: nam dulcedine quoque et suavitate quddam sunt conspergenda, ut possint auditoris animum inflectere in quamcunque voluerint partem.*

But a very ingenious person, who knows how to unite philosophy with criticism; and to all that is elegant in *taste*, to add what is most just and accurate in *science*, hath, in the following note, shewn the very foundation of Dr. Bentley's criticism to be erroneous.

"There are a multitude of words in every language, which are sometimes used in a *wider*, sometimes in a *more restrained* sense. Of this kind are καλὸν of the Greeks, the *pulchrum* of the Romans, and the words by which they are translated in modern languages. To whatever subjects these epithets are applied, we always intend to signify that they give us *pleasure*: and we seldom apply them to any subjects, but those which please by means of impres-

sions made on the fancy: *including* under this name the reception of images conveyed directly by the sight itself. As Poetry therefore always addresses itself to the imagination, every species of *poetical excellence* obtains the name of *Beauty*: and, among the rest, the power of pleasing us by affecting the *passions*; an effect which intirely depends on the various images presented to our view. In this sense of the word *beautiful*, it cannot be opposed to *pathetic*. *Pulchrum enim quascunque carminis virtutes, etiam ipsam* dulcedinem, *in se continere meritò videatur.*

But nothing, I think, can be plainer, than that this epithet is often used more *determinately*. Visible forms are not merely occasions of pleasure, in common with other objects, but they produce a pleasure of a singular kind. And the power they have of producing it, is properly denominated by the name of *Beauty*. Whether Regularity and Variety have been rightly assigned, as the circumstances on which it depends, is a question; which in this place we need not consider. It cannot at least be denied, that we make a distinction among the objects of sight, when the things themselves are removed from our view: and that we annex the names of Beauty and Deformity to different objects and different pictures, in consequence of these perceptions. I ask then, what is meant, when the words are thus applied? Is it only that we are *pleased* or *displeased*? This surely cannot be said. For the

epithets would then be applied with equal propriety to the objects of different senses: and the fragrance of a flower, for instance, would be a species of beauty; the bitterness of wormwood a species of deformity. —Do we then mean, that we receive pleasure and pain by means of the *Imagination*? We may indeed mean *this*: but we certainly mean *more* than this. For the same names are used and applied, in a manner perfectly similar, by numbers of persons who never once thought of this artificial method of distinguishing their ideas. There is then some kind of perception, common to them and us, which has occasioned this uniformity in our ways of speaking: and whether you will chuse to consider the perceptive faculty as resulting only from habit, or allow it the name of a *Sense* of Beauty; whether these perceptions can, or cannot, be resolved into some *general* principle, imagination of private advantage, or sympathy with others, are, in the present case, circumstances wholly indifferent.

If it be admitted that the epithets, of which we are speaking, were originally used in this restrained sense, it is easy to see that they would readily obtain the more *extended* signification. For the species of pleasure to which they were first confined, was found always to arise from images impressed on the fancy: what then more natural, than to apply the same words to every species of pleasure resulting from the imagination, and to every species of images productive of pleasure? Thus the *beauty* of a hu-

man person might originally signify such combinations of figure and colour, as produced the *peculiar* perception above-mentioned. *Pulchritudo corporis* (says Cicero) *aptâ compositione membrorum movet oculos, et eo ipso delectat, &c.*—But from this signification to the other the transition was easy and obvious. If every beautiful form gave pleasure, every pleasing form might come to be called beautiful: not because the same perceptions are excited by *all* (the pleasures being apparently different) but because they are all excited in the same manner. And this is confirmed by a distinction which every one understands between beauties of the *regular* and *irregular* kind. When we would distinguish these from each other, we call the latter *agreeable*, and leave to the former only the name of *beautiful*; that is, we confine the latter term to its proper and original sense.—In much the same manner objects *not visible* may sometimes obtain the name of beauty, for no other reason than because the imagination is agreeably employed about them; and we may speak of a beautiful *character*, as well as a beautiful *person*: by no means intending that we have the same *feeling* from the one as the other, but that in both cases we are *pleased*, and that in both the *imagination* contributes to the pleasure.

Now as every *representative art* is capable of affording us pleasure, and this pleasure is occasioned by images impressed on the fancy; every pleasing production of art, will of course obtain the name of

beautiful. Yet this hinders us not from considering beauty as a *distinct* excellence in such productions. For we may distinguish, either in a picture or poem, between the pleasures we receive directly from the imitation of *visible forms*, and those which principally depend on *other* kinds of imitation: And we may consider visible forms themselves either as *occasions* of pleasure, in *common* with other objects; or as yielding us that *peculiar* delight which they alone are capable of yielding. If we use the word *beautiful* in this *limited* sense, it is very intelligibly opposed to *pathetic*. Images of Groves, Fields, Rocks and Water, afford us a pleasure extremely different from that which we find in the indulgence of our *tender affections*: nor can there be any danger of confounding the agreeable perception received from a masterly statue of an Apollo or a Venus, with that which arises from a representation of the *terrors* men feel under a storm or a plague.

It is no objection to what has been said, that the objects we call *beautiful* may also in some cases be occasions of *passion*. The sight, for instance, of a beautiful person may give birth to the passion of Love: yet to perceive the beauty and to feel the passion are two different things. For every beautiful object does not produce love in every observer, and the same passion is sometimes excited by objects not beautiful; I mean not called beautiful by the persons themselves who are affected by them. And the distinction between these feelings, would receive

further confirmation (if indeed there could be any doubt of it) from observing that people frequently speak of beauty, and as far as appears intelligibly, in persons of their *own sex;* who feel perhaps no *passion* but that of *envy :* which will not surely be thought the same with the perception of *beauty.*

There is then no room for an objection to the text of Horace, as it stood before Dr. B.'s emendation: unless it should be thought an impropriety to oppose two epithets which are *capable* of being understood in senses *not opposite.* But there is not the least ground for this imagination. For when a word of uncertain signification is *opposed* to another whose signification is certain; the opposition itself *determines* the sense. The word *day* in one of its senses includes the whole space of twenty-four hours: yet it is not surely an impropriety to oppose *day* to *night.*—In like manner the words *pulchra poëmata,* if we were not directed by the context, might signify *good poems* in general: but when the beauty of a poem is *distinguished* from other excellences, this distinction will lead us to confine our idea to *beautiful imagery;* and, we know it is agreeable to the sentiments which Horace expresses in other places, to declare that this kind of merit is *insufficient* in *dramatic* writers, from whom we expect a pleasure of very different kind. Indeed the most exquisite painting, if it is not constantly subordinate to this higher end, becomes not only insufficient, but *impertinent :* serving only to divert the attention, and interrupt the course of the passions.

It may seem perhaps that the force of a *Latin* expression cannot be ascertained from reflections of this sort, but must be gathered from citations of particular passages. And this indeed is true with regard to the *peculiarities* of the language. But the question before us is of a different kind. It is a question of *Philosophy* rather than *Criticism:* as depending on those differences of ideas, which are marked by similar forms of expression in *all* languages."

102. SI VIS ME FLERE, DOLENDUM EST PRIMUM IPSI TIBI:] *Tragedy*, as [c] one said, who had a heart to feel its tenderest emotions, *shewed forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue.* In order to awaken and call forth in the spectator all those sympathies, which naturally await on the lively exhibition of such a scene, the writer must have a soul *tuned* to the most exquisite sensibility, and susceptible of the same vibrations from his own created images, which are known to *shake* the sufferer in real life. This is so uncommon a pitch of humanity, that 'tis no wonder, so few have succeeded in this *trying* part of the drama. Euripides, of all the ancients, had most of this sympathetic tenderness in his nature, and accordingly we find him without a rival in this praise. Τραγικώτατος τῶν ποιητῶν, says Aristotle of him [Περὶ ποιητ. κ. ιγ'.] and to the same purpose another great critic, *In affectibus cum omnibus mirus, tum in iis, qui*

c Sir *Philip Sidney.*

MISERATIONE *constant, facile præcipuus.* [Quinct. l. x. c. i.] They, who apply themselves to express the *pitiable* ἐλεεινὸν in tragedy, would do well to examine their own hearts by this rule, before they presume to practise upon those of others. See, further, this remark applied by Cicero to the subject of oratory, and inforced with his usual elegance and good sense. [l. ii. c. xlv. *De oratore.*]

103. TUNC TUA ME INFORTUNIA LAEDENT.] This is expressed with accuracy. Yet the truth is, The more we are *hurt* with representations of this sort, the more we are *pleased* with them. Whence arises this strange *Pleasure?* The question hath been frequently asked, and various answers have been given to it.

But of all the solutions of this famous difficulty, that which we have just now received from Mr. Hume, is by far the most curious.

His account in short is, "That the force of imagination, the energy of expression, the power of "numbers, the charms of imitation, are all naturally of themselves delightful to the mind; that "these sentiments of beauty, being the *predominant* "emotions, seize the whole mind, and convert the "uneasy melancholy passions into themselves. In "a word, that the sentiments of *beauty*, excited by "a good tragedy, are the superior prevailing move-"ments, and transform the subordinate impressions

"arising from *grief*, *compassion*, *indignation*, and *ter-*
"*ror*, into one uniform and strong enjoyment." [*See four Dissertations by* D. Hume, *Esq. p.* 185, *&c.*]

I have but two objections to this ingenious theory. ONE is, that it supposes the impression of grief or terror, excited by a well-written tragedy, to be weaker than that which arises from our observation of the faculties of the writer, the power of numbers, and imitation. Which to me is much the same thing as saying, That the sight of a precipice hanging over our heads makes a fainter impression on the eye, than the shrubs and wild flowers with which it happens to be covered. The fact is so far otherwise, that, if the tragedy be well-written, I will venture to say, the faculties of the writer, the charms of poetry, or even the thought of imitation, never come into the spectator's head. But he may feel the effect of them, it will be said, for all that. True: But unluckily the whole effect of these things is (and that was my OTHER objection) to deepen the impressions of grief and terror. They are out of place, and altogether impertinent, if they contribute to any other end. So that to say, The impression of grief and terror from a tragic story, strong as it is in itself, and made still stronger by the art of the poet, is a weaker impression, than the mere pleasure arising from that *art*, is methinks to account for one mystery by another ten times greater, and to make the poet a verier *magician* than Horace ever intended to represent him.

This ingenious solution then, being so evidently founded on the supposition of a *false fact*, deserves no further notice. As to the *difficulty* itself, the following hints may, perhaps, enable the reader, in some measure, to account for it.

1. It is not to be doubted but that we love to have our *attention* raised, and our *curiosity* gratified. So far the ABBE' DU BOS' system may be admitted.

2. The representation, however distressful, is still seen to be a representation. We find our hearts affected, and even pained, by a good tragedy. But we instantly recollect that the scene is fictitious; and the *recollection* not only abates our uneasiness, but diffuses a secret joy upon the mind in the discovery we make that the *occasion* of our uneasiness is not real. Just as our awaking from a frightful dream, and sometimes a secret consciousness of the illusion during the dream itself, is attended with pleasure. That so much of M. DE FONTENELLE'S notion must be admitted, is clear, because children, who take the sufferings on the stage for realities, are so afflicted by them that they don't care to repeat the experiment.

But still, all this is by no means a full account of the matter. For,

3. It should be considered, that ALL the uneasy Passions, in the very time that we are distressed by them, nay, though the occasions be instant and real, have a secret complacency mixed with them. It seems as if Providence, in compassion to human

feeling, had, together with our sorrows, infused a kind of balm into the mind, to temper and qualify, as it were, these bitter ingredients. But,

4. Besides this *general* provision, the nature of the *peculiar* passions, excited by tragedy, is such as, in a more eminent degree, must produce pleasure. For what are these, but indignation at prosperous vice, or the commiseration of suffering virtue? And the agitation of these passions is even, in real life, accompanied with a certain delight, which was, no doubt, intended to quicken us in the exercise of those social offices. Still further.

5. To the pleasure *directly* springing from these passions we may add another which naturally, but imperceptibly almost steals in upon us from *reflexion*. We are conscious to our own humanity on these tender occasions. We understand and feel that it is *right* for us to be affected by the distresses of others. Our pain is softened by a secret exultation in the rectitude of these sympathies. 'Tis true, this reflex act of the mind is prevented, or suspended at least for a time, when the sufferings are real, and concern those for whom we are most interested. But the fictions of the stage do not press upon us so closely.

Putting all these things together, the conclusion is, That though the impressions of the theatre are, in their immediate effect, painful to us, yet they must, on the whole, afford an extreme pleasure, and that in proportion to the degree of the first

painful impression. For not only our attention is rouzed, but our moral instincts are gratified; we reflect with joy that they are so, and we reflect too that the sorrows which call them forth and give this exercise to our humanity, are but fictitious. We are occupied, in a word, by a *great* event; we are melted into tears by a *distressful* one; the heart is relieved by this burst of sorrow; is cheared and animated by the finest moral feelings; exults in the consciousness of its own sensibility; and finds, in conclusion, that the whole is but an illusion.

The sum is, that we are not so properly delighted *by* the Passions, as *through* them. They give *occasion* to the most pleasing movements and gratulations. The art of the poet indeed consists in giving *pain.* But nature and reflexion fly to our relief; and though they do not convert our pain into joy (for that methinks would be little less than a new kind of *Transubstantiation)* they have an equivalent effect in producing an exquisite joy out of our preceding sorrows.

119. AUT FAMAM SEQUERE, &c.] The connexion lies thus: *Language* must agree with *character; character* with *fame,* or at least with *itself.*

123. SIT MEDEA FEROX INVICTAQUE.] Horace took this instance from Euripides, where the *unconquered fierceness* of this character is preserved in that due mediocrity, which nature and just writing

demand. The poet, in giving her character, is content to say of her,

> Βαρεῖα γὰρ φρὴν ὅδ' ἀνέξεται κακῶς
> Πάσχεσ'

And

> Δεινὴ γάρ. ὅ τοι ῥᾳδίως γε συμβαλὼν
> Εχθράν τις αὐτῇ, καλλίνικον οἴσεται.

And she herself, when opening to the chorus her last horrid purpose, says, fiercely indeed, but not frantically:

> Μηδείς με φάυλην κἀσθενῆ νομιζέτω
> Μηδ' ἡσυχαίαν.

And this is *nature*, which Seneca not perceiving, and yet willing to write up to the critic's rule, hath outraged her character beyond all bounds, and, instead of a resolute, revengeful woman, hath made of her a downright fury. Hence her passion is wrought up to a greater height in the very first scene of the Latin play, than it ever reaches in the Greek poet. The tenor of her language throughout is,

> *invadam deos,*
> *Et cuncta quatiam.*

And hence, in particular, the third and fourth acts expose to our view all the horrors of sorcery (and those too *imaged* to an extravagance) which Euripides, with so much better judgment, thought fit entirely to conceal.

126. SERVETUR AD IMUM QUALIS AB INCEPTO PROCESSERIT, ET SIBI CONSTET.] The rule is, as appears from the reason of the thing, and from Aristotle, "Let an *uniformity* of character be preserved, or at least a *consistency*:" i. e. either let the manners be exactly the same from the beginning to the end of the play, as those of Medea, for instance, and Orestes; or, if any change be necessary, let it be such as may consist with, and be easily reconciled to, the manners formerly attributed; as is seen in the case of Electra and Iphigenia. We should read then, it is plain,

*servetur ad imum*
*Qualis ab incepto processerit,* AUT *sibi constet.*

The mistake arose from imagining, that a character could no other way *consist* with itself, but by being *uniform.* A mistake however, which, as I said, not the reason of the thing only, but Aristotle's rule might have set right. It is expressed thus: Τέταρτον δὲ τὸ ὁμαλόν. Κἂν γὰρ ἀνώμαλός τις ᾖ, ὁ τὴν μίμησιν παρέχων καὶ τοιοῦτον ἦθος ὑποτιθεὶς, ὅμως ὁμαλῶς ἀνώμαλον δεῖ εἶναι. Ποιητ. κ. ιέ. which last words, having been not at all understood, have kept his interpreters from seeing the true sense and scope of the precept. For they have been explained of such characters, as that of *Tigellius* in Horace; which, however proper for satyr, or for farcical comedy, are of too fantastic and whimsical a nature to be admitted into tragedy; of which Aristotle must

there be chiefly understood to speak, and to which Horace, in this place, alone confines himself. "'Tis true, indeed, it may be said, that though a "*whimsical* or *fantastic* character be improper for "tragedy, an *irresolute* one is not. Nothing is "finer than a struggle between different passions; "and it is perfectly natural, that in such a circum-"stance, each should prevail by turns." But then there is the widest difference between the two cases. *Tigellius*, with all his fantastic irresolution, is as *uniform* a character as that of *Mitio*. If the expression may be allowed, its very *inconsistency* is of the essence of its *uniformity*. On the other hand, Electra, torn with sundry conflicting passions, is most apparently, and in the properest notion of the word, *ununiform*. One of the strongest touches in her character is that of a high, heroic spirit, sensible to her own, and her family's injuries, and determined, at any rate, to revenge them. Yet no sooner is this revenge perpetrated, than she softens, relents, and pities. Here is a manifest *ununiformity*, which can, in no proper sense of the expression lay claim to the critic's ὁμαλὸν, but may be so managed, by the poet's skill, as to become consistent with the basis or foundation of her character, that is, to be ὁμαλῶς ἀνώμαλον. And that this, in fact, was the meaning of the critic, is plain from the similar example to his own rule, given in the case of Iphigenia: which he specifies (how justly will be considered hereafter) as an instance of the

ἀνωμάλος, *irregular*, or *ununiform*, character, ill-expressed, or made *inconsistent*. So that the genuine sense of the precept is, "Let the manners be "uniform; or, if ununiform, yet consistently so, "or uniformly ununiform:" exactly copied, according to the reading, here given by Horace. Whereas in the other way, it stands thus: "Let your "characters be uniform, or unchanged; or, if you "paint an ununiform character (such as Tigellius) "let it be ununiform all the way; *i. e.* such an irre-"gular character to the end of the play, as it was "at the beginning; which is, in effect, to say, let "it be *uniform*:" which apparently destroys the latter part of the precept, and makes it an unmeaning tautology with the former.

127. AUT SIBI CONSTET.] The ELECTRA and IPHIGENIA of Euripides have been quoted, in the preceding note, as instances of *ununiform* characters, justly sustained, or what Aristotle calls, *uniformly ununiform*: And this, though the general opinion condemns the one, and the great critic himself, the other; the reader will expect some account to be given of this singularity.

1. The objection to Electra, is, that her character is drawn with such heightenings of implacability and resentment, as make it utterly incredible, she should, immediately on the murder of Clytæmnestra, fall into the same excess of grief and regret, as Orestes.

In confutation of this censure I observe, 1. That the objection proceeds on a mistaken presumption, that the distress of Electra is equally violent with that of Orestes. On the contrary, it is discriminated from it by two plain marks. 1. Orestes's grief is expressed in stronger and more emphatic terms—*he accuses the Gods—he reproaches his sister—he dwells upon every horrid circumstance, that can inhance the guilt of the murder.* Electra, in the mean time, *confesses the scene to be mournful—is apprehensive of bad consequences—calmly submits to the just reproaches of her brother.* 2. He labours as much as possible, to clear himself from the imputation of the act. She takes it wholly on herself, but, regarding it rather as her fate, than her fault, comforts herself in reflecting on the justice of it.

πατρὸς δ' ἔτισας φόνον δικαίως. Act v.

This last circumstance puts the widest difference between the two cases. The one shews a perfect distraction of mind, which cannot even bear the consciousness of its crimes: the other, a firm and steddy spirit, sensible indeed to its misery, but not oppressed or astonished by it.

2. But this measure of grief, so delicately marked, and, with such truth of character, ascribed to Electra, ought not, it is further insisted, to have shewn itself, immediately, on the murder of Clytæmnestra. But why not? There is nothing in the *character of Electra, the maxims of those times,* or *in the dispo-*

*sition of the drama itself*, to render this change improper or incredible. On the contrary, there is much under each of these heads, to lead one to expect it.

1. *Electra's character* is indeed that of a fierce, and determined, but withall of a generous and virtuous woman. Her motives to revenge were, principally, a strong sense of justice, and superior affection for a father; not a rooted, unnatural aversion to a mother. She acted, as appears, not from the perturbation of a tumultuous revenge (in that case indeed the objection had been of weight) but from a fixed abhorrence of wrong, and a virtuous sense of duty. And what should hinder a person of this character from being instantly touched with the distress of such a spectacle?

2. *The maxims of those times also favour this conduct.* For, 1. The notions of strict remunerative justice were then carried very high. This appears from the *Lex talionis*, which, we know, was in great credit in elder Greece; from whence it was afterwards transferred into the Law of the XII Tables. Hence *blood for blood* [αἷμα δ' αἵματος δανεισμὸς,—as the messenger, in his account of the death of Ægysthus, expresses it, Act iv.] was the command and rule of justice. This the Chorus, as well as the parricides, frequently insist upon, as the ground and justification of the murder. 2. This severe vengeance on enormous offenders was believed, not only conso-

nant to the rules of *human*, but to be the object, and to make the especial care of the *divine*, justice. And thus the ancients conceived of this very case. *Juvenal*, speaking of Orestes,

*Quippe ille* DEIS AUCTORIBUS *ultor*
*Patris erat cæsi media inter pocula.* Sat. viii.

And to this opinion agrees that tradition, or rather fiction, of the poets, who, though they represent the judges of the Areopagus as divided in their sentiments of this matter, yet make no scruple of bringing in Minerva herself to pronounce his absolution. *Hoc etiam fictis fabulis doctissimi homines memoriæ prodiderunt, eum, qui patris ulciscendi causâ matrem necavisset, variatis hominum sententiis, non solum divinâ, sed etiam sapientissimæ Deæ sententiâ absolutum* [CIC. pro MILON.] The venerable council of Areopagus, when judging by the severe rules of *written* justice, it seems, did not condemn the criminal; and the *unwritten* law of equity, which the fable calls the *wisdom of Pallas*, formally *acquitted* him. The murder then was not against *human*, and directly agreeable to the determinations of *divine*, justice. Of this too the Chorus takes care to inform us:

Νέμει τοι δίκαν θεὸς ὅταν τύχῃ. Act. iv.

This explains the reason of Electra's question to Orestes, who had pleaded the impiety of murdering a mother,

Καὶ μὲν ἀμύνων πατρὶ, δυσσεβὴς ἔσῃ;

the force of which lies in this, that a father's death

revenged upon the guilty mother, was equally *pious* as just. 3. This vengeance was, of course, to be executed by the nearest relations of the deceased. This the law prescribed in judicial prosecutions. Who then so fit instruments of fate, when that justice was precluded to them? This is expressed, in answer to the plea of Orestes, that he should suffer the vengeance of the Gods for the murder of his mother; Electra replies,

Τῷ δαὶ πατρῴαν διαμεθῇς τιμωρίαν;

i. e. Who then shall repay vengeance to our father? She owns the consequence, yet insists on the duty of incurring it. There was no other, to whom the right of vengeance properly belonged.

4. Further the pagan doctrine of fate was such, that, in order to discharge duty in one respect, it was unavoidable to incur guilt, in another. This was the case here, Phœbus commanded and fate had decreed: yet obedience was a crime, to be expiated by future punishment. This may seem strange to us, who have other notions of these matters, but was perfectly according to the pagan system. The result is, that they knowingly exposed themselves to vengeance, in order to fulfil their fate. All that remained was to lament their destiny, and revere the awful and mysterious providence of their Gods. And this is, exactly, what Orestes pleads, in vindicatoin of himself, elsewhere:

Ἀλλ' ὡς μὲν ἐκ εὖ, μὴ λεγ', εἴργασαι τάδε,
Ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς δράσασιν ἐκ εὐδαιμόνως. Orest. Act. ii.

5. Lastly, it should be remembered, how heinous a crime adultery was esteemed in the old world; when, as well as murder, we find it punished with death. The law of the XII Tables expressly says, ADVLTERII CONVICTAM VIR ET COGNATI, VTI VELINT, NECANTO. Now, all these considerations put together, Electra might assist at the assassination of her mother, consistently with the strongest feelings of piety and affection. That these then should instantly break forth, so soon as the debt to justice, to duty, and to fate was paid, is nothing wonderful. And this, by the way, vindicates the Chorus from the inconsistency, by some charged upon it, in condemning the act, when done, which before they had laboured to justify. The common answer, "That the Chorus follows the character of the people," is insufficient. For (besides that the Chorus always sustains a moral character) whence that inconsistency in the people themselves? The reason was, the popular creed of those times. It had been an omission of duty to have declined, it was criminal to execute, the murder.

3. The disposition of the drama (whether the *most* judicious, or not, is not the question) was calculated to introduce this change with the greatest probability. Electra's principal resentment was to Ægysthus. From him chiefly proceeded her ill treatment, and from him was apprehended the main danger of the enterprize. Now, Ægysthus being taken off in the beginning of the preceding act, there was time

to indulge all the movements and gratulations of revenge, which the objection supposes should precede, and for a while suspend the horrors of remorse, before they come to the murder of Clytæmnestra. This is rendered the more likely by the long parley, that goes before it; which rather tends to soften, than exasperate, her resentments, and seems artfully contrived to prepare the change, that follows.

On the whole, Electra's concern, as managed by the poet, is agreeable to the tenor of her character, and the circumstances of her situation. To have drawn her otherwise, had been perhaps in the taste of modern tragedy, but had certainly been beside the line of nature, and practice of the ancients.

II. The case of Iphigenia, though a greater authority stand in the way, is still easier. Aristotle's words are, τῷ δὲ ἀναμάλῳ [παράδειγμα] ἡ ἐν Αὐλίδι Ἰφιγένεια. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔοικεν ἡ ἱκετεύουσα τῇ ὑςέρᾳ, i. e. "Iphigenia is an instance of the inconsistent "character: for there is no probable conformity be-"twixt her fears and supplications at first, and her "firmness and resolution afterwards." But how doth this appear, independently of the name of this great critic? Iphigenia is drawn indeed, at first, fearful and suppliant: and surely with the greatest observance of nature. The account of her destination to the altar was sudden, and without the least preparation; and, as Lucretius well observes, in commenting her case, NÚBENDI TEMPORE IN IPSO; when her thoughts were all employed, and, accord-

ing to the simplicity of those times, confessed to be so, on her promised nuptials. The cause of such destination too, as appeared at first, was the private family interest of Menelaus. All this justifies, or rather demands, the strongest expression of female fear and weakness. "But she afterwards recants "and voluntarily devotes herself to the altar." And this, with the same strict attention to probability. She had now informed herself of the importance of the case. Her devotement was the demand of Apollo, and the joint petition of all Greece. The glory of her country, the dignity and interest of her family, the life of the generous Achilles, and her own future fame, were, all, nearly concerned in it. All this considered, together with the high, heroic sentiments of those times, and the superior merit, as was believed, of voluntary devotement, Iphigenia's character must have been very unfit for the distress of a whole tragedy to turn upon, if she had not, in the end, discovered the readiest submission to her appointment. But, to shew with what wonderful propriety the poet knew to sustain his characters, we find her, after all, and notwithstanding the heroism of the change, in a strong and passionate apostrophe to her native Mycenæ, confessing some involuntary apprehensions and regrets, the remains of that instinctive abhorrence of death, which had before so strongly possessed her.

Ἔθρεψας Ἑλλάδι μέγα φάος—
θανοῦσα δ' οὐκ ἀναίνομαι.

Once the bright star of Greece—
But I submit to die.

This, I take to be not only a full vindication of the consistency of Iphigenia's character, but as delicate a stroke of nature, as is, perhaps, to be found in any writer.

After the writing of this note, I was pleased to find, that so sensible a critic, as P. Brumoi, had been before me in these sentiments concerning the character of Iphigenia. The reasons he employs, are nearly the same. Only he confirms them all by shewing, that the Iphigenia of Racine, which is modelled, not according to the practice of Euripides, but the Comment of Aristotle, is, in all respects, so much the worse for it. In justice to this ingenious writer, it should be owned, that he is almost the only one of his nation, who hath perfectly seen through the foppery, or, as some affect to esteem it, the refinement of French manners. This hath enabled him to give us, in his *Théatre des Grecs*, a masterly and very useful view of the Greek stage; set forth in all its genuine simplicity, and defended on the sure principles of nature and common sense.

128. DIFFICILE EST PROPRIE COMMUNIA DICERE: Lambin's Comment is *Communia hoc loco appellat Horatius argumenta fabularum à nullo adhuc tractata: et ita, quæ cuivis exposita sunt et in medio quodammodo posita, quasi vacua et à nemine occupata.* And that this is the true meaning of *commu-*

*nia* is evidently fixed by the words *ignota indictaque,* which are explanatory of it: so that the sense, given it in the commentary, is unquestionably the right one. Yet, notwithstanding the clearness of the case, a late critic hath this strange passage: *Difficile quidem esse proprie communia dicere, hoc est, materiam vulgarem, notam, et è medio petitam ita immutare atque exornare, ut nova et scriptori propria videatur, ultro concedimus; et maximi proculdubio ponderis ista est observatio. Sed omnibus utrinque collatis, et tum difficilis, tum venusti, tam judicii quam ingenii ratione habita, major videtur esse gloria fabulam formare penitus novam, quam veterem, utcunque mutatam, de novo exhibere.* [Poet. Præl. v. ii. p. 164.] Where having first, put a wrong construction on the word *communia,* he imploys it to introduce an impertinent criticism. For where does the poet prefer the glory of refitting *old* subjects, to that of inventing new ones? The contrary is implied in what he urges about the superior difficulty of the latter; from which he dissuades his countrymen, only in respect of their abilities and inexperience in these matters; and in order to cultivate in them, which is the main view of the Epistle, a spirit of correctness, by sending them to the old subjects, treated by the Greek writers.

131. PUBLICA MATERIES PRIVATI JURIS ERIT, &c.] *Publica materies* is just the reverse of what the poet had before stiled *communia;* the latter meaning

such subjects or characters, as, though by their nature left in common to all, had yet, in fact, not been *occupied* by any writer—the former those, which had already been made *public* by *occupation*. In order to acquire a property in subjects of this sort, the poet directs us to observe the three following cautions: 1. *Not to follow the trite, obvious round of the original work*, i. e. not servilely and scrupulously to adhere to its plan or method. 2. *Not to be translators, instead of imitators*, i. e. if it shall be thought fit to imitate more expressly any part of the original, to do it with freedom and spirit, and without a slavish attachment to the mode of expression. 3. *Not to adopt any particular incident, that may occur in the proposed model, which either decency or the nature of the work would reject.* M. Dacier illustrates these rules, which have been conceived to contain no small difficulty, from the Iliad; to which the poet himself refers, and probably not without an eye to particular instances of the errors, here condemned, in the Latin tragedies. For want of these, it may be of use to fetch an illustration from some examples in our own. And we need not look far for them. Almost every modern play affords an instance of one or other of these faults. The single one of Catiline by B. Jonson is, itself, a specimen of them all. This tragedy, which hath otherwise great merit, and on which its author appears to have placed no small value, is, in fact, the Catilinarian war of Sallust, put into poeti-

cal dialogue, and so offends against the *first* rule of the poet, *in following too servilely the plain beaten round of the Chronicle.* 2. Next, the speeches of Cicero and Catiline, of Cato and Cæsar are, all of them, direct and literal translations of the historian and orator, in violation of the *second* rule, which forbids *a too close attachment to the mode, or form of expression.* 3. There are several transgressions of that rule, which injoins *a strict regard to the nature and genius of the work.* One is obvious and striking. In the history, which had, for its subject, the whole Catilinarian war, the fates of the conspirators were distinctly to be recorded, and the preceding debates, concerning the manner of their punishment, afforded an occasion, too inviting to be overlooked by an historian, and above all a republican historian, of embellishing his narration by set harangues. Hence the long speeches of Cæsar and Cato in the senate have great propriety, and are justly esteemed among the leading beauties of that work. But the case was totally different in the drama; which, taking for its subject the single fate of Catiline, had no concern with the other conspirators, whose fates at most should only have been hinted at, not debated with all the circumstance and pomp of rhetoric on the stage. Nothing can be more flat and disgusting, than this calm, impertinent pleading; especially in the very heat and winding up of the plot. But the poet was misled by the beauty it appeared to have in the original

composition, without attending to the peculiar laws of the drama, and the *indecorum* it must needs have in so very different a work.

136. NEC SIC INCIPIES, UT SCRIPTOR CYCLICUS OLIM:] All this [to v. 153] is a continuation of the poet's advice, given above,

*Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus*
*Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus.*

For, having first shewn in what respects a close observance of the epic form would be vicious in tragedy, he now prescribes how far it may be usefully admitted. And this is, 1. [from 136 to 146] in the simplicity and modesty of the exordium; and, 2. [to v. 153] in the artificial method and contexture of the piece. 1. The reason of the former rule is founded on the impropriety of raising a greater expectation, at setting out, than can afterwards be answered by the sequel of the poem. But, because the epic writers themselves, from whom this conduct was to be drawn, had sometimes transgressed this rule, and as the example of such an error would be likely to infect, and, in all probability, actually did infect, the tragic poets of that time, he takes occasion, 1. to criticize an absurd instance of it; and, 2. to oppose to it the wiser practice of Homer.

2. The like conduct he observes under the second article. For, being to recommend to the tragic writer such an artificial disposition of his subject, as *hastens rapidly to the event*, and rejects, as imper-

tinent, all particulars in the round of the story, which would unnecessarily obstruct his course to it —a plan essentially necessary to the legitimate epic—he first glances at the injudicious violation of this method in a certain poem on *the return of* Diomed, and then illustrates and lays open the superior art and beauty of the Iliad. And all this, as appears, for the sole purpose of explaining and inforcing the precept about forming the plots of tragedies from epic poems. Whence we see, how properly the examples of the errors, here condemned, are taken, not from the *drama*, as the less attentive reader might expect, but solely from the epos; for, *this* being made the object of imitation to the dramatic poet, as the tenor of the place shews, it became necessary to guard against the influence of bad models. Which I observe for the sake of those, who, from not apprehending the connection of this and such like passages in the epistle, hastily conclude it to be a confused medley of precepts concerning the art of poetry, in general; and not a regular well-conducted piece, uniformly tending to lay open the state, and to remedy the defects, of the Roman stage.

148. SEMPER AD EVENTUM FESTINAT; &c.] The disposition, here recommended to the poet, might be shewn *universally* right from the clearest principles. But the propriety and beauty of it will, perhaps, be best apprehended by such, as are unused

to the more abstract criticism, from attending to a *particular* instance. Let us conceive an objector then to put the following query: "Supposing the "author of the Æneis to have related, in the natu-"ral order, the destruction of Troy, would not the "subject have been, to all intents and purposes, as "much *one*, as it is under its present form; in "which that event is told, in the second book, by "way of episode?" I answer by no means. The reason is taken from *the nature of the work*, and from *the state and expectations of the reader*.

1. The *nature of an epic or narrative poem* is this, that it lays the author under an obligation of shewing any event, which he formally undertakes in his own person, at full length, and with all its material circumstances. Every figure must be drawn in full proportion, and exhibited in strong, glowing colours. Now had the subject of the second book of the Æneis been related, in this extent, it must not only have taken up one, but many books. By this faithful and animated *drawing*, and the time it would necessarily have to *play* upon the imagination, the event had grown into such importance, that the remainder could only have passed for a kind of Appendix to it.

2. The same conclusion is drawn from considering *the state of the reader*. For, hurried away by an instinctive impatience, he pursues the proposed event with eagerness and rapidity. So circumstantial a detail, as was supposed, of an intermediate

action not necessarily connected with it, breaks the course of his expectations, and throws forward the point of view to an immoderate distance. In the mean time the action, thus interposed and presented to his thoughts, acquires by degrees, and at length ingrosses his whole attention. It becomes the important theme of the piece; or, at least, what follows sets out with the disadvantage of appearing to him, as a new and distinct subject.

But now being related by way of episode, that is, as a succinct, summary narration, not made by the poet himself, but coming from the mouth of a person, necessarily ingaged in the progress of the action, it serves for a short time to interrupt, and, by that interruption to sharpen, the eager expectation of the reader. It holds the attention, for a while, from the main point of view; yet not long enough to destroy that impatient curiosity, which looks forward to it. And thus it contributes to the same end, as a piece of miniature, properly introduced into a large picture. It amuses the eye with something relative to the painter's design, yet not so, as to with-hold its principal observation from falling on the greater subject. The parallel will not hold very exactly, because the painter is, of necessity, confined to the same *instant* of time; but it may serve for an illustration of my meaning. Suppose the painter to take, for his subject, that part of Æneas's story, where, with his *penates*, his *father*, and his *son*, he is preparing to set sail for Italy. To draw

*Troy in flames*, as a constituent part of this picture, would be manifestly absurd. It would be painting two subjects, instead of one. And perhaps *Troja incensa* might seize the attention before

*Ascanium Anchisenque patrem Teucrosque penates.*

But a distant perspective of *burning Troy* might be thrown into a corner of the piece, that is, episodically, with good advantage; where, instead of distracting the attention, and breaking the unity of the subject, it would concenter, as it were, with the great design, and have an effect in augmenting the distress of it.

143. TU, QUID EGO ET POPULUS, &c.] The connexion is this. "But though the strict observance "of these rules will enable the poet to conduct his "*plot* to the best advantage, yet this is not *all* which "is required to a *perfect* tragedy. If he would "seize the attention, and secure the applause, of "the audience, something further must be at-"tempted. He must (to return to the point, from "which I digressed, v. 127) be particularly studious "to express the *manners*. Besides the peculiarities "of *office, temper, condition, country*, &c. before "considered, all which require to be drawn with "the utmost fidelity, a singular attention must be "had to the characteristic differences of *age*."

*Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores.*

The reason of this conduct is given in the commentary. It further serves to adorn this part of the

epistle [which is wholly preceptive from v. 89 to 202] with those beautiful pourtraitures of human life, in its several successive stages, which nature and Aristotle had instructed him so well to paint.

157. MOBILIBUSQUE DECOR NATURIS DANDUS ET ANNIS.] MOBILIBUS] *non levibus aut inconstantibus, sed quæ variatis ætatibus immutantur.* Lambin. NATURIS] By this word is not meant, simply, that instinctive *natural* biass, implanted in every man, to this or that character, but, in general, *nature*, as it appears diversified in the different periods of life. The sense will be: A certain *decorum* or propriety must be observed in painting the natures or dispositions of men varying with their years.

There is then no occasion for changing the text, with Dr. Bentley, into

*Mobilibusque decor, maturis dandus et annis.*

179. AUT AGITUR RES IN SCENIS, AUT ACTA REFERTUR: &c.] The connexion is this. The *misapplication*, just now mentioned, destroys the *credibility*. This puts the poet in mind of another misconduct, which hath the same effect, viz. *intus digna geri promere in scenam.* But, before he makes this observation, it was proper to premise a *concession* to prevent mistakes, viz.

*Segnius irritant animos*, &c.

182. NON TAMEN INTUS DIGNA GERI PROMES IN SCENAM :] I know not a more striking example of the transgression of this rule, than in Seneca's Hippolytus; where Theseus is made to weep over the mangled members of his son, which he attempts to put together on the stage. This, which has so horrid an appearance in the *action*, might have been so contrived, as to have an infinite beauty in the *narration*; as may be seen from a similar instance in Xenophon's Cyropædia, where Panthea is represented putting together the torn limbs of Abradates.

185. NE PUEROS CORAM POPULO, &c.] Seneca, whom we before [v. 123] saw so sollicitous to keep up to one rule of Horace, here makes no scruple to transgress another. For, in violation of the very letter of this precept, and of all the laws of decency and common sense, he represents Medea butchering her children in the face of the people; and, as if this too faintly painted the fury of her character, he further aggravates the cruelty of the execution, with all the horrors of a lingering act. This, seemingly inconsistent, conduct of the poet was, in truth, owing to one and the same cause, namely, "The endeavour "to sustain Medea's character." For, wanting true taste to discern the exact boundaries, which nature had prescribed to the human character, or true genius to support him in a due preservation of it, he, as all bad writers use, for fear of doing too little,

unfortunately does too much; and so, as Shakespear well expresses it, *o'ersteps the modesty of nature*, inflating her *sentiments* with extravagant passion, and blackening her *acts* with circumstances of unnatural horror. Though some of these faults I suspect he only copied. For, to say nothing of *that* of Ennius, Ovid's Medea was, at this time, very famous, and as, I think, may be collected from the judgment passed upon it by Quinctilian, had some of the vices, here charged upon Seneca. *Ovidii Medea*, says he, *videtur mihi ostendere, quantum vir ille præstare potuerit, si ingenio suo temperare, quàm indulgere, maluisset.* It is not possible indeed to say exactly, wherein this *intemperance* consisted; but it is not unlikely, that, amongst other things, it might shew itself in the sorceries and incantations; a subject, intirely suited to the wildness of Ovid's genius; and which, as appears from his relation of this story in the metamorphosis, he knew not how to treat without running into some excess and luxuriance in that part. But whether this were the cause, or no, the very treating a subject, which had gone through such hands, as Euripides, Ennius, and Ovid, was enough to expose a writer of better judgment, than Seneca, to some hazard. For, in attempting to outdo originals, founded on the plan of simple nature, a writer is in the utmost danger of running into affectation and bombast. And indeed, without this temptation, our writers have generally found means to incur these excesses; the very best of them being too apt to fill

their plots with unnatural incidents, and to heighten their characters into caracatures. Though it may be doubted, whether this hath been owing so much to their own ill taste, as to a vicious compliance with that of the public; for, as one says, who well knew the expediency of this craft, and practised accordingly, *to write unnatural things is the most probable way of pleasing them who understand not nature.* [Dryd. Pref. to Mock Astrol.]

193. ACTORIS PARTES CHORUS, &c.] See also *Aristotle* [περ. ποιητ. κ. ίη.] The judgment of two such critics, and the practice of wise antiquity concurring to establish this precept concerning the Chorus, it should thenceforth, one would think, have become a fundamental rule and maxim of the stage. And so indeed it appeared to some few writers. The most admired of the French tragic poets ventured to introduce it into two of his latter plays, and with such success, that, as one observes, *It should, in all reason, have disabused his countrymen on this head: l'essai heureux de M. Racine, qui les* [*chœurs*] *a fait revivre dans* ATHALIE *et dans* ESTHER, *devroit, ce semble, nous avoir detrompez sur cet article.* [P. Brumoi, vol. i. p. 105.] And, before him, our *Milton*, who, with his other great talents, possessed a supreme knowledge of antiquity, was so struck with its use and beauty, as to attempt to bring it into our language. His *Sampson Agonistes* was, as might be expected, a master-piece. But even his credit hath not been sufficient to restore

the Chorus. Hear a late Professor of the art declaring, *De choro nihil disserui, quia non est essentialis dramati, atque à neotericis penitus*, ET, ME JUDICE, MERITO, REPUDIATUR. [Præl. Poet. vol. ii. p. 188.] Whence it hath come to pass, that the chorus hath been thus neglected, is not now the inquiry. But that this critic, and all such are greatly out in their judgments when they presume to censure it in the ancients, must appear (if we look no further) from the double use, insisted on by the poet. For, 1. A *chorus* interposing, and bearing a part in the progress of the action, gives the representation that *probability*[d], and striking resemblance of real life, which every man of sense perceives and *feels* the want of upon our stage; a want, which nothing but such an expedient as the chorus can possibly relieve. And, 2. The importance of its other office [v. 196] to the *utility* of the representation, is so great, that, in a moral view, nothing can compensate for this deficiency. For it is necessary to the truth and decorum of characters, that the *manners*, bad as well as good, be drawn in strong, vivid colours, and to that end that immoral sentiments, forcibly expressed and speciously maintained, be sometimes *imputed* to the speakers,

d *Quel avantage ne peut il [le poëte] pas tirer d'une troupe d'acteurs, qui remplissent sa scene, qui rendent plus sensible la continuité de l'action, et qui la font paroitre* VRAISEMBLABLE, *puisqu'il n'est pas naturel qu'elle se passe sans temoins. On ne sent que trop le vuide de notre Théatre sans chœurs, &c.* [Le Théatre des Grecs, vol. i. p. 105.]

Hence the sound philosophy of the chorus will be constantly wanting to rectify the wrong conclusions of the audience, and prevent the ill impressions that might otherwise be made upon it. Nor let any one say, that the audience is well able to do this for itself: Euripides did not find even an Athenian theatre so quick-sighted. The story is well known [Sen. Ep. 115.] that when this painter of the *manners* was obliged, by the rules of his art, and the character to be sustained, to put a run of bold sentiments in the mouth of one of his persons, the people instantly took fire, charging the poet with the *imputed* villany, as though it had been his *own*. Now if such an audience could so easily misinterpret an attention to the truth of character into the real doctrine of the poet, and this too, when a chorus was at hand to correct and disabuse their judgments, what must be the case, when the *whole* is left to the sagacity and penetration of the people? The wiser sort, 'tis true, have little need of this information. Yet the reflexions of sober sense on the course and occurrences of the representation, clothed in the noblest dress of poetry, and inforced by the joint powers of *harmony* and *action* (which is the true character of the chorus) might make it, even to such, a no unpleasant or unprofitable entertainment. But these *two* are a small part of the *uses* of the chorus: which in every light is seen so important to the truth, decorum, and dignity of the tragic scene, that the *modern* stage, which hath not thought proper to adopt it, is even, with the advan-

tage of, sometimes, the justest moral painting and sublimest imagery, but a very faint shadow of the *old;* as must needs appear to those, who have looked into the ancient models, or, divesting themselves of modern prejudices, are disposed to consult the dictates of plain sense. For the use of such I once designed to have drawn into one view the several important benefits, arising to the drama from the observance of this rule, but have the pleasure to find myself prevented by a sensible dissertation of a good French writer, which the reader will find *in the* VIII *Tom. of the history of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres.*—Or, it may be sufficient to refer the English Reader to the late tragedies of ELFRIDA and CARACTACUS; which do honour to modern poetry, and are a better apology, than any I could make, for the ancient chorus.

193. OFFICIUMQUE VIRILE] Heinsius takes *virile* adverbially for *viriliter*. But this is thought harsh. What hinders, but that it may be taken *adjectively?* And then, agreeably to his interpretation, *officium virile* will mean a strenuous, diligent office, such as becomes a person interested in the progress of the action. The precept is leveled against the practice of those poets, who, though they allot the part of a *persona dramatis* to the *chorus*, yet for the most part make it so idle and insignificant an one, as is of little consequence in the representation: by which means the advantage of *probability*, intended to be

drawn from this use of the *chorus*, is, in great measure, lost.

194. NEU QUID MEDIOS INTERCINAT ACTUS, QUOD NON PROPOSITO CONDUCAT ET HAEREAT APTE.] How necessary this advice might be to the writers of the Augustan age cannot certainly appear; but, if the practice of Seneca may give room for any suspicion, it should seem to have been much wanted; in whom I scarcely believe there is one single instance of the chorus being employed in a manner, consonant to its true end and character. To support this general censure, which may seem to bear hard on the poet, let us examine, in this view, one of the best of his plays, I mean, the Hippolytus; whose chorus, throughout, bears a very idle and uninteresting part—hath no share in the action—and sings impertinently.

At the end of the *first* act, when Phædra had avowed her passion for Hippolytus, instead of declaiming against her horrid purpose, enlarging on the danger and impiety of giving way to unnatural lusts, or something of this nature, which was surely the office of the chorus, it expatiates wantonly, and with a poetic luxuriance, on the sovereign, wide-extended powers of love.

In the close of the *second* act, instead of applauding the virtuous obstinacy of Hippolytus, and execrating the mad attempt of Phædra, it coolly sings the danger of beauty.

The *third* act contains the false accusation of Hippolytus, and the too easy deception of Theseus.

What had the chorus to do here, but to warn against a too great credulity, and to commiserate the case of the deluded father? Yet it declaims, in general, on the unequal distribution of *good* and *ill*.

After the *fourth* act, the chorus should naturally have bewailed the fate of Hippolytus, and reverenced the mysterious conduct of Providence in suffering the cruel destiny of the innocent. This, or something like it, would have been to the purpose. But, as if the poet had never heard of this rule of *coherence*, he harangues, in defiance of common sense, on the instability of an high fortune, and the security of a low.

It will further justify this censure of *Seneca*, and be some amusement to the critical reader, to observe, how the several blunders, here charged upon him, arose from an injudicious imitation of *Euripides*.

I. There are two places in the Greek Hippolytus, which Seneca seems to have had in view in his first chorus. We will consider them both:

1. When the unhappy Phædra at length suffers the fatal secret of her passion to be extorted from her, she falls, as was natural, into all the horrors of self-detestation, and determines not to survive the confession of so black a crime. In this conjuncture, the *nutrix*, who is not drawn, as in modern tragedy, an unmeaning confidante, the mere depositary of the poet's secrets, but has real manners assigned to her, endeavours, with the highest beauty of character, to divert these horrid intentions, and mitigate in some

sort the guilt of her passion, by representing to her the resistless and all-subduing force of love. "Venus, "says this virtuous *monitrix*, is not to be withstood, "when she rushes upon us with all her power. Nor "is any part of creation vacant from her influence. "She pervades the air, and glides through the deeps. "We, the inhabitants of the earth, are all subject "to her dominion. Nay, ask of the ancient bards, "and they will tell you, that the Gods themselves are "under her controul." And so goes on, enumerating particular examples, from all which she infers at last the necessity of Phædra's yielding to her fate. Again,

2. Towards the close of the Greek play, when, upon receiving the tragical story of his son's sufferings, Theseus began to feel his resentments give way to the workings of paternal affection, and, on that account, though he was willing to conceal the true motive, even from himself, had given orders for the dying Hippolytus to be brought before him, the chorus very properly flings out into that fine address to Venus,

Σὺ τὰν θεῶν ἄκαμπτον φρένα, &c.

the substance of which is, "That Venus, with her "swift-winged boy, who traverses the earth and "ocean, subdues the stubborn hearts of Gods and "men: inspiring into all, on whom her influence "rests, whether inhabitants of the land or deep, and "more especially the race of man, a soft and sym-"pathizing tenderness; demonstrating hereby, that "she alone extends her all-controuling dominion over

"universal nature." This song, as thus connected with the occasion, is apparently very proper, and, when reduced from the pomp of lyric eloquence to plain prose, is only an address of congratulation to the powers of love; confessing and celebrating their influence, in thus softening the rigors of a father's hate, and awakening in his breast the soft touches of returning pity and affection.

Now these two places, taken together, are plainly the ground-work of that song,

*Diva, non miti generata ponto,* &c.

but how improperly applied, has appeared, in respect of the latter of them, from what has been observed concerning the *occasion*; and must be acknowledged of the other, from the different *character* of the person to whom it is given; and also from hence, that the chorus in the Greek poet expressly condemns the impiety of such suggestions in the nurse, and admonishes Phædra not to lend an ear to them. The chorus, when it comes to sing in him, is far otherwise employed; not in celebrating the triumphs, but deprecating the pernicious fury of this passion, and in lamenting the fatal miscarriages of Hymeneal love.

II. The second song, on the graces of the prince's person, and the danger of beauty, which follows on the abrupt departure of Hippolytus, rejecting, with a virtuous disdain, the mad attempts of Phædra and her confidante, is so glaringly improper, as not to admit an excuse from any example. And yet, I am

afraid, the single authority, it has to lean on, is a very short hint, slightly dropped by the chorus in the Greek poet on a very different occasion. It is in the entrance of that scene, where the mangled body of Hippolytus is brought upon the stage; on the sight of which the chorus very naturally breaks out,

> Καὶ μὲν ὁ τάλας ὅδε δὴ ϛείχει
> Σάρκας νεαρὰς
> Ξανθόν τε κάρα διαλυμανθείς.

and yet, as the reader of just taste perceives, nothing beyond a single reflexion could have been endured even here.

III. The next song of the chorus may seem directly copied from Euripides. Yet the two occasions will be found extremely different. In Seneca, Theseus, under the conviction of his son's guilt, inveighs bitterly against him, and at last supplicates the power of Neptune to avenge his crimes. The chorus, as anticipating the effects of this imprecation, arraigns the justice of the Gods. In the Greek poet, the father, under the like circumstances, invokes the same avenging power, and, as some immediate relief to his rage, pronounces the sentence of banishment, and urges the instant execution of it, against him. Hippolytus, unable to contend any longer with his father's fury, breaks out into that most tender complaint (than which nothing was ever more affecting in tragedy)

> Ἄρηρεν, ὡϛ ἔοικεν, ὦ τάλας ἐγώ. &c.

containing his last adieu to his country, companions, and friends. The chorus, touched with the pathos of this apostrophe, and commiserating his sad reverse of fortune, enters with him into the same excess of lamentation, and, as the first expression of it, lets fall this natural sentiment, "That though "from coolly contemplating the divine superintendency of human affairs, there results abundant "confidence and security against the ills of life, yet "when we look abroad into the lives and fortunes of "men, that confidence is apt to fail us, and we "find ourselves discouraged and confounded by the "promiscuous and undistinguishing appointments "of *good* and *ill*." This is the thought, which Seneca hath imitated, and, as his manner is, outraged in his chorus of the third act:

*O magna parens, Natura, Deûm,* &c.

But the great difference lies here. That, whereas in *Euripides* this sentiment is proper and agreeable to the state and circumstances of the chorus, which is ever attentive to the progress of the action, and is most affected by what immediately presents itself to observation; in *Seneca* it is quite foreign and impertinent; the attention of the chorus naturally turning, not on the distresses of Hippolytus, which had not yet commenced, but on the rashness and unhappy delusion of Theseus, as being that, which had made the whole subject of the preceding scene. But the consequence of that delusion, it will be said, was obvious. It may be so. But the chorus, as

any sensible spectator, is most agitated by such reflexions, as occur to the mind from those scenes of the drama, which are actually passing before it, and not from those which have not yet taken place.

IV. What was remarked of the *second* song of the chorus will be applicable to the *fourth*, which is absurdly founded on a single reflexion in the Greek poet, but just touched in a couple of lines, though much more naturally introduced. Theseus, plunged in the deepest affliction by the immature death of Phædra, and not enduring the sight of the supposed guilty author of it, commands him into banishment, "Lest, as he goes on, his former triumphs and "successes against the disturbers of mankind, "should in consequence of the impunity of such "unprecedented crimes, henceforth do him no ho-"nour." The chorus, struck with the distressful situation of the old king, and recollecting with him the sum of his former glories, is made to exclaim,

Οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως εἴποιμ' ἂν εὐτυχεῖν τινα
Θνητῶν· τὰ γὰρ δὴ πρῶτ' ἀνέστραπται πάλιν.

i. e. *there is henceforth no such thing, as human happiness, when the first examples of it are thus sadly reversed.* Which casual remark Seneca seizes and extends through a whole chorus; where it visibly serves to no other end, but to usurp a place, destined for far more natural and affecting sentiments.

If I have been rather long upon this head, it is because I conceive this critique on the Hippolytus

will let the reader, at once, into the true character of *Seneca;* which, he now sees, is that of a mere *declamatory moralist.* So little deserving is he of the reputation of a just dramatic poet.

196. ILLE BONIS FAVEATQUE, &c.] *The chorus,* says the poet, *is to take the side of the good and virtuous,* i. e. is always to sustain a moral character. But this will need some explanation and restriction. To conceive aright of its office, we must suppose the *chorus* to be a number of persons, by some probable cause assembled together, as witnesses and spectators of the great action of the drama. Such persons, as they cannot be wholly uninterested in what passes before them, will very naturally bear some share in the representation. This will principally consist in declaring their sentiments, and indulging their reflexions freely on the several events and distresses as they shall arise. Thus we see the *moral,* attributed to the chorus, will be no other than the dictates of plain sense; such as must be obvious to every thinking observer of the action, who is under the influence of no peculiar partialities from *affection* or *interest.* Though even these may be supposed in cases, where the character, towards which they *draw,* is represented as virtuous.

A chorus, thus constituted, must always, it is evident, take the part of virtue; because this is the natural and almost necessary determination of mankind, in all ages and nations, when acting freely

and unconstrained. But then it is to be observed,

1. That this moral character, or approbation of virtue, must also be considerably influenced by the common and established notions of *right* and *wrong*; which, though in essential points, for the most part, uniformly the same under all circumstances, yet will, in some particular instances, be much distorted by the corrupt principles and practices of different countries and times. Hence the *moral* of the stage will not be always strictly philosophical; as reflecting to us the image not of the sage's speculation, but, of the obvious sense of common, untutor'd minds. The reader will find this observation applied to the case of the *chorus* in the Medea, in note on v. 200; and it might further, perhaps, be extended to the vindication of some others, to which the ignorant temerity of modern criticism hath taken occasion to object. But,

2. The *moral character* of the chorus will not only depend very much on the several mistaken notions and usages, which may happen, under different circumstances, to corrupt and defile *morality*; but allowance is also to be made for the *false policies*, which may prevail in different countries; and especially if they constitute any part of the subject, which the drama would represent. If the *chorus* be made up of free citizens, whether of a republic, or the milder and more equal royalties, they can be under little or no temptation to suppress or disguise their real sentiments on the several events, presented

to their observation; but will be at liberty to pursue their natural inclination of speaking the truth. But should this venerable assembly, instead of sustaining the dignity of free subjects, be, in fact, a company of slaves, devoted by long use to the service and interests of a master, or awed, by the dread of tyrannical power, into an implicit compliance with his will, the baleful effect, which this very different situation must have on their moral character, is evident. Their opinions of persons and things will cease to be oracular; and the interposition of the *chorus* will be more likely to injure the cause of virtue, than to assist and promote it. Nor can any objection be made, on this account, to the conduct of the poet; who keeps to nature and probability in drawing the chorus with this imperfectly moral character; and is only answerable for his ill choice of a subject, in which such a pernicious representation is required. An instance will explane my meaning more perfectly. The chorus in the *Antigone*, contrary to the rule of Horace, takes the side of the *wicked*. It consists of a number of old Thebans, assembled by the order of Creon to assist, or rather to be present, at a kind of mock council; in which he meant to issue his cruel interdict of the rites of sepulture to the body of Polynices; a matter of the highest consequence in those days, and upon which the whole distress of the play turns. This veteran troop of vassals enter at once into the horrid views of the tyrant, and obsequiously go along with him

in the projects of his cruelty; calmly, and without the appearance of any virtuous emotion, consenting to them all. The consequence is that the interludes of the chorus are, for the most part, impertinent, or something worse; cautiously avoiding such useful reflexions, as the nature of the case must suggest, or indulging, by their flatteries, the impotent tyranny of their prince. And yet no blame can be fairly charged upon the great poet, who hath surely represented, in the most striking colours, the pernicious character, which a chorus, under such circumstances, would naturally sustain. The fault must therefore fall, where the poet manifestly intended to throw it, on the accursed spirit of despotism; which extinguishes, or over-rules, the suggestions of common sense; kills the very seeds of virtue, and perverts the most sacred and important offices, such as is that of the chorus, into the means and instruments of vice. The glory, which he designed, by this representation, to reflect upon the government and policy of his own state, is too glaring to be overlooked. And he hath artfully contrived to counter-act any ill impressions on the minds of the people, from the prostituted authority of the chorus, by charging them, in the persons of Hæmon and Antigone, with their real motives and views. In all indifferent things, in which the passions or interests of their master were not concerned, even this chorus would of course preserve a moral

character. But we are to look for it no further. This is the utmost verge and boundary of a slave's virtue. An important truth, which, among many greater and more momentous instructions, furnishes this to the dramatic poet, "That, if he would apply "the chorus to the uses of a sound and useful moral, "he must take his subjects, not from the annals of "despotic tyranny, but from the great events, which "occur in the records of free and equal common-"wealths."

200. ILLE TEGAT COMMISSA] This important advice is not always easy to be followed. Much indeed will depend on the choice of the subject, and the artful constitution of the fable. Yet, with all his care, the ablest writer will sometimes find himself embarrassed by the chorus. I would here be understood to speak chiefly of the moderns. For the ancients, though it has not been attended to, had some peculiar advantages over us in this respect, resulting from the principles and practices of those times. For, as it hath been observed of the ancient epic muse, that she borrowed much of her state and dignity from the false *theology* of the pagan world, so, I think, it may be justly said of the ancient tragic, that the has derived great advantages of probability from its mistaken *moral*. If there be truth in this reflexion, it will help to justify some of the ancient choirs, that have been most objected to by the moderns. To give an instance or two, and leave the

curious reader to extend the observation at his leisure.

I. In the Hippolytus of Euripides, the chorus, which is let into Phædra's design of killing herself, suffers this rash attempt to take effect, rather than divulge the intrusted secret. This, to a modern reader, seems strange; and we are ready to arraign the poet of having allotted a very unfit and unbecoming part to his *chorus*, which, in order to observe a *critical*, is thus made to violate a *moral* precept, or at least to sacrifice the more essential part of its character to a punctilio of honour. But the case was quite otherwise. This suicide of Phædra, which, on our stricter moral plan, is repugnant to the plain rules of duty, was, in the circumstances supposed, fully justified on the pagan system. Phædra had confessed the secret of her criminal passion. By the forward zeal of her confident, her disgrace is made known to Hippolytus; and thereby, as she conceives, rendered notorious to the public. In this distress she had only one way to vindicate her honour, and that was at the expence of her life. Rather than bear the insupportble load of public infamy, she kills herself. That this was a justifiable cause of self-murder in the eye of the chorus is clear from the reason, there assigned, of her conduct, manifestly in approbation of it. "Phædra, says the chorus, oppressed and "borne down by her afflictions, has recourse to this "expedient of suicide,

τάν τ' εὔδοξον ἀνθαιρεμένα
Φάμαν, ἀπαλλάσσεσά
Τ ἀλγεινὸν φρενῶν ἔρωτα.

"for the sake of her good fame, and in order to free "herself from the tortures of a cruel pssion." And how agreeable this was to the pagan system, in general, let the reader collect from the following testimonies in Cicero: *Si omnia fugiendæ turpitudinis adipiscendæque honestatis causâ faciemus, non modo stimulos doloris, sed etiam fulmina fortunæ contemnamus licebit: præsertim cum paratum sit illud ex hesternâ disputatione perfugium. Ut enim, si, cui naviganti prædones insequantur, Deus quis dixerit, Ejice te navi; præsto est, qui excipiat, &c. omnem omittas timorem; sic, urgentibus asperis et odiosis doloribus, si tanti non sint ut ferendi sint, quo sit confugiendum vides.* [Tusc. Disp. l. ii. 26.] And, again, in the close of the V^th disputation, *Mihi quidem in vita servanda videtur illa lex, quæ in Græcorum conviviis obtinet: Aut bibat, inquit, aut abeat. Et recte. Aut enim fruatur aliquis pariter cum aliis voluptate potandi; aut, ne sobrius in violentiam vinolentorum incidat, ante discedat: sic* INJURIAS FORTUNÆ, QUAS FERRE NEQUEAS, DEFUGIENDO RELINQUAS.

II. Another example may, I think, be fetched from the *Medea*. Scarcely any thing has been more the subject of modern censure, than the part, which the chorus is made to act in this tragedy. *Whence comes it*, says M. Dacier, *that the chorus, which*

*consists of Corinthian women, is faithful to a stranger against their sovereign*[d]? This good Frenchman, it seems, thought it a kind of treason, even on the stage, and where a moral character was to be sustained, to take part against a tyrant.

[d] See also to the same purpose P. Corneille's *Exam. sur la Medée.* If the objection, made by these critics, to the part of the chorus, be, *the improbability*, as was explained at large in the preceding note, *of a slave's taking the side of virtue against the pleasure of his tyrant*, the manifest difference of the two cases will shew it to be without the least foundation. For 1. the chorus in the Medea consists of women, whom compassion and a secret jealousy and indignation at so flagrant an instance of the violated faith of marriage, attach, by the most natural connexion of interests, to the cause and person of the injured queen. In the Antigone, it is composed of old courtiers, devoted, by an habitude of slavery, to the will of a master, assembled, by his express appointment, as creatures of his tyranny, and, prompted, by no strong movements of self-love, to take part against him. 2. In the Antigone, the part of Creon is *principal*. Every step, in the progress of the play, depends so immediately upon him, that he is almost constantly upon the stage. No reflexions could therefore be made by the chorus, nor any part against him be undertaken, but directly in his presence, and at their own manifest hazard. The very reverse of this is the case in the Medea. Creon is there but a subaltern person—has a very small part assigned him in the conduct of the play—is, in fact, introduced upon the stage but in one single scene. The different situation of the chorus, resulting from hence, gives occasion for the widest difference in their conduct. They may speak their resentments freely. Unawed by the frowns and menaces of their tyrant, they are left at liberty to follow the suggestions of virtue. Nothing here offends against the law of probability, or, in the least, contradicts the reasoning about the chorus in the Antigone.

But he will further say, that the moral character of the chorus was forfeited in thus concealing, and, in effect, abetting the impious cruelties of Medea. *The laws of nature and of God were transgressed in rendering this service to her.* All which is very true, supposing the reader to judge of this matter by the purer christian moral. But how will he prove this to be the case on the received notions and practices of paganism? It appears, this critic did not apprehend, what a moderate attention to ancient history and manners might have taught him, that the violation of conjugal fidelity was a crime of that high nature, as to deserve in the public opinion, and to excuse, the severest vengeance of retaliation. This the laws expresly allowed to the injuries of the husband. And, it is probable, the wife might incline to think the reason of the case extended also to her. What is certain is, that we find some of the deepest scenes of horror, which ancient history furnishes, or ancient fiction could paint, wrought up from the occasion of this neglect of conjugal faith. And it is well observed by one, in speaking of the difference between the ancient and modern stage, that what is now held the fit subject of comic mirth and ridicule in christian theatres, was never employed but to stir up the utmost horror and commiseration, on the heathen. "We do not find, says this agree-"able writer, any comedy in so polite an author, as "Terence, raised upon the violations of the marriage-"bed. The falshood of the wife or husband has

"given occasion to noble tragedies; but a Scipio and "Lælius would have looked upon incest or murder, "to have been as proper subjects for comedy." This is strictly and precisely the truth. And, therefore, as the crimes of incest or murder were believed deserving of the highest punishment by the Pagans, and every good man was ready to interest himself in seeing it inflicted*; so, in the case of the open violation of the marriage-compact, the fiercest acts of revenge were justified in the public opinion, and passed only for acts of strict justice. And for this, if we wanted further authority, we have the express word of the chorus. The Corinthian women do not barely consent to secrecy, in virtue of an extorted oath or promise (though more might have been said for this, than every reader is aware of) but in consequence of their entire and full approbation of her intentions. For thus, in answer to Medea's petition to them, without the least reserve or hesitation, they are made to reply,

*Δράσω τάδ· ἐνδίκως γὰρ ἐκτίσῃ πάσιν*
*Μήδεια.*

*I will do it; for this revenge on a husband is just.*

We see then the chorus, in keeping the secret of Medea's murders, was employed in its great office of countenancing and supporting *salubrem justitiam, wholesome justice.* And, therefore, the scholiast, with M. Dacier's leave, gave a fit and proper account

* See note on v. 127.

of the matter (so far was it from being *impious* and *ridiculous)* in saying, *that the Corinthian women being free,* i. e. not devoted to the service of Creon, by the special duties of any personal attachment, *take the side of justice, as the chorus is wont to do on other occasions.* The circumstance of their *freedom* is properly mentioned. For this distinguishes their case from that of the *nutrix,* who upon receiving the account of Jason's cruelties, cries out,

> Ὄλοιτο μὲν μὴ, δεσπότης γάρ ἐς' ἐμὸς,
> Ἀτὰρ κακός γ' ὢν εἰς φίλους ἀλίσκεται.

And that the chorus enter'd into Medea's designs against her husband, the tyrant Creon, and her rival, on reasons of justice and equity only, and not (as is hastily believed by some, who have not enough attended to the decorum of the ancient tragedy) for the sake of forwarding the poet's plot, may be certainly shewn. For when, in the fury of her resentments, and as the full completion of her revenge, the mother comes to propose the murder of her innocent children, the chorus starts with horror at the thought, dissuades her from it in the most earnest and affecting manner[f], and seems to have concealed the dreadful secret only from the persuasion, that

g *For her own sake,* as is pleaded, *and in obedience to the laws,*

> Σέ τ' ὠφελεῖν θέλουσα, καὶ νόμοις βροτῶν
> Ξυλλαμβάνουσα, δρᾷν σ' ἀπεννέπω τάδε. v. 812.

which shews, that the other murders were not against the spirit of the laws, whatever became of the letter of them.

it was too horrid and unnatural to be perpetrated. The reader will collect this with pleasure, by turning to the fine song, which follows. It may be further observed, that Medea herself, in opening this last purpose of her rage to the chorus, exacts fidelity of them only, *as they wished well to an injured queen, and were women;*

Εἴπερ φρονεῖς εὖ δεσπόταις, γυνή τ' ἔφυς.

which is beautifully contrived by the poet, to discriminate the two cases, and to intimate to us, that reasons of justice were now no longer to be pleaded.

In sum, though these acts of severe avenging justice might not be according to the express letter of the laws, or the more refined conclusions of the PORCH or ACADEMY; yet there is no doubt, that they were, in the general account, esteemed fit and reasonable. And, it is to be observed, in order to pass a right judgment on the ancient chorus, that, though in virtue of their office, they were obliged universally to sustain a moral character; yet this moral was rather political and popular, than strictly legal or philosophic. Which is also founded on good reason. The scope and end of the ancient theatre being to serve the interests of virtue and society, on the principles and sentiments, already spread and admitted amongst the people, and not to correct old errors, and instruct them in philosophic truth.

202. TIBIA NON, UT NUNC, ORICHALCO, &c.] [from v. 202 to v. 220.] This is one of those many passages in the epistle, about which the critics have said a great deal, without explaining any thing. In support of what I mean to offer, as the true interpretation, I observe,

That the poet's intention certainly was, not to censure the *false* refinements of their stage-music; but, in a short digressive history (such as the didactic form will sometimes require) to describe the rise and progress of the *true*. This I collect, 1. From *the expression itself*; which cannot, without violence, be understood in any other way. For, as to the words *licentia* and *præceps*, which have occasioned much of the difficulty, the *first* means a *freer use*, not a *licentiousness*, properly so called; and the *other* only expresses a vehemence and rapidity of language, naturally productive of a quicker elocution, such as must of course attend the more numerous harmony of the lyre:—not, as M. Dacier translates it, *une eloquence temeraire et outrée*, an extravagant straining and affectation of style. 2. From *the reason of the thing*; which makes it incredible, that the music of the theatre should then be most complete, when the times were barbarous, and entertainments of this kind little encouraged or understood. 3. From *the character of that music itself*; for the rudeness of which, Horace, in effect, apologizes in defending it only on the score of the imperfect state of the stage, and the simplicity of its

judges. But what shall we say then to those lines,

*Indoctus quid enim saperet liberque laborum,*
*Rusticus urbano confusus, turpis honesto?*

which seem to imply a censure on these Improvements, as unworthy the approbation of *wise* men; contrary to what I have just now supposed to be the scope of this whole passage.

On the strictest attention, I believe we are to understand them as a *Sneer*, in passing, on what grave and philosophic men have observed of these refinements, which they constantly treat, as *Corruptions*. See note on v. 218. But the mixed auditories of these days, says the poet with his usual *badinage*, were not so *wise*. 'Tis, as if he had said, "What I mention here as an improvement in dramatic music is, in the ideas and language of some grave men, an abuse and perversion of it to immoral purposes. It may be so: but consider, for what sorts of people these theatrical entertainments were designed: for the *ignorant clown and citizen, the plebeian and gentleman*, huddled together into one confused mass, and crowding to the theatre, on a holyday for some relief from their ordinary toils and occupations. And alas, what do these men know, or consider of this austere *wisdom*?

But the cast of the whole passage is, besides, such as favours the supposition of an intended Irony. Hence the *Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco vincta*, &c. delivered in the usual tone of declaimers against

modern manners. Hence the epithets, *frugi castusque verecundusque*, to denote the quality of those who assisted, of old, at these *virtuous* entertainments. And hence the enormity of that state of things, when the people were afterwards permitted to regale on holy days, *impune*. This intention too accounts for the terms *licentia*, *luxuries*, *facundia*, *præceps*, and others, which being of ambiguous interpretation, the poet purposely chose, to mimic, and humour, as it were, the objectors in their favourite language on this occasion. Till at last, impatient to continue the raillery any further, he concludes at once with an air of solemnity very proper to confound the impertinence of such criticism.

Utiliumque sagax rerum, et divina futuri
Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis.

All this the reader sees is agreeable to the poet's *prescription* elsewhere,

—Sermone opus est tristi, sæpe *jocoso*.

and indeed to his own *practice* on an hundred occasions. So that on the whole there is little doubt of his intention in the lines,

Indoctus quid enim *saperet*, &c.

At least, in this view the poet, I am apt to think, will be found intelligible and even elegant. Whereas, on any other supposition of his numerous commentators, I cannot see that the verses before us (as they here stand) have either propriety or common sense.

The interpretation then of this whole passage, from v. 202 to 220, will stand thus. "The Tibia, "says the poet, was at first *low* and *simple*. The "*first*, as best agreeing to the *state of the stage*, "which required only a soft music to go along with, "and assist the chorus; there being no large and "crowded theatres to *fill* in those days. And the "*latter*, as suiting best to the *state of the times*; "whose simplicity and frugal manners exacted the "severest temperance, as in every thing else, so, "in their dramatic ornaments and decorations. But, "when conquest had enlarged the territory, and "widened the walls of Rome; and, in consequence thereof, a social spirit had dispelled that severity "of manners, by the introduction of frequent fes-"tival solemnities; then, as was natural to expect, a "freer and more varied harmony took place. Nor let "it be objected that this *freer harmony* was itself an "abuse, a corruption of the severe and *moral* music of "ancient times. Alas! we were not as yet so *wise*, "to see the inconveniencies of this improvement. "And how should we, considering the nature and "end of these theatrical entertainments, and the "sort of men of which our theatres were made up? "But, leaving the Philosopher to speculate at his "ease, on this matter, thus, in *fact*, it was, "that "the *Tibicen*, the musician, who played to the de-"clamation in the acts, instead of the rude and sim-"pler strain of the old times, gave a richness and "variety of tone; and, instead of the old inactive

"posture, added the grace of motion to his art. "Just in the same manner, continues he, it happened to the *Lyre*, i. e. *the music in the chorus*, "which originally, as that of the *Tibia*, was severe "and simple; but, by degrees, acquired a quicker "and more expressive modulation, such as corresponded to the more elevated and passionate turn "of the poet's style, and the diviner enthusiasm of "his sentiment." All that is further wanting to support and justify this interpretation, will be found in the notes on particular passages.

203. TENUIS SIMPLEXQUE, &c.] It may here be observed of the manner, in which the poet hath chosen to deliver this whole part [from v. 202 to 295] that, besides its other uses, it tends directly to convey to his readers, and impress upon them in the strongest manner, the principal instruction, he has in view, and with which the epistle more expresly concludes, *viz. The uses and importance of a spirit of critical application.* For, in speaking of the *stage music*, of the *satyrs*, and the *Greek tragedy* (all which come naturally in his way, and are very artfully connected) he chuses to deduce the account of each from its ruder and less polished original; tracing it through its several successive stages, and marking out to us the gradual polish and refinement, which it acquired from increasing diligence and correctness. The *Tibia* at first was *simple* and *rude*—The *satyrs naked* and *barbarous*

—and the *Greek tragedy itself deformed and shapeless* in the cart of Thespis. Care and attention reformed each. It follows,

*Nil intentatum nostri liquere poetæ, &c.*

i. e. our poets have not been wanting in their attempts to excel in these several particulars. What is necessary to their success is, *limæ labor et mora.* If the reader bear this in mind, it will help him to see the order and scope of this part more distinctly.

204. ASPIRARE ET ADESSE CHORIS, &c.] *Chorus* here means the whole dramatic performance, which was originally nothing else.

206. UTPOTE PARVUS, ET FRUGI CASTUSQUE VERECUNDUSQUE, &c.] M. *Dacier* finds here *four* causes *of the little regard the ancients had for plays* [he should have said, of their being satisfied with the *Tibia,* all rude and simple as is here described] *la premiere, que le peuple Romain étoit encore alors en petit nombre : la seconde, qu'il étoit sage : la troisiéme, qu'il étoit chaste, c'est à dire pieux : et la quatriéme, qu'il étoit modeste.* But the three last epithets are synonymous, all of them expressing what, though he took three guesses for it, he had the ill fortune to miss at last, *that plainness and simplicity* of character, *that frugal reserve and moderation in the use of any thing,* which so essentially belongs to rude minds, uninstructed in the arts of life. His *four* causes are, in fact,

then but two; which have been fully considered in note on v. 202.

211. ACCESSIT NUMERISQUE MODISQUE LICENTIA MAJOR.] M. *Dacier* takes *licentia major* in a bad sense, as implying *lasciveté, a culpable and licentious refinement.* But the *licence,* here spoken of, with regard to *numbers* and *sounds,* like that in another place, which respects *words* [l. 51.] is one of those, which is allowed, when *sumpta pudenter.* The comparative *major,* which is a *palliative,* shews this; and is further justified by a like passage in *Cicero, De Oratore* [l. iii. c. 48.] where speaking of this very licence in poetry, he observes, that out of the Heroic and Iambic measure, which were at first strictly observed, there arose by degrees the Anapæst, *procerior quidam numerus, et ille licentior et divitior Dithyrambus;* evidently not condemning this change, but opposing it to the rigorous and confined measure of the elder poets. But the expression itself occurs in the piece entitled *Orator,* in which, comparing the freedoms of the poetical and oratorial style, *in ea* [i. e. *poetica*] says he, *licentiam statuo majorem esse, quam in nobis, faciendorum jungendorumque verborum.* The poet says, this *licence* extended *numeris modisque,* the former of which words will express that *licence of metre,* spoken of by *Cicero,* and which is further explained v. 256, &c. where an account is given of the improvement of the Iambic verse.

214. SIC PRISCAE, — — — ARTI
TIBICEN, &c.
SIC FIDIBUS ETIAM, &c.]

This is the application of what hath been said, in general, concerning the refinement of theatrical music to the case of *tragedy*. Some commentators say, and to *comedy*. But in this they mistake, as will appear presently. M. *Dacier* hath, I know not what conceit about a comparison betwixt the *Roman* and *Greek* stage. His reason is, *that the lyre was used in the Greek chorus, as appears*, he says, *from Sophocles playing upon this instrument himself in one of his tragedies*. And was it not used too in the Roman chorus, as appears from Nero's playing upon it in several tragedies? But the learned critic did not apprehend this matter. Indeed from the caution, with which his guides, the dealers in antiquities, always touch this point, it should seem, that they too had no very clear conceptions of it. The case I take to have been this: The *Tibia*, as being most proper to accompany the declamation of the acts, *cantanti succinere*, was constantly employed, as well in the Roman tragedy as comedy. This appears from many authorities. I mention only two from Cicero. *Quam multa* [Acad. l. ii. 7.] *quæ nos fugiunt in cantu, exaudiunt in eo genere exercitati: Qui, primo inflatu Tibicinis, Antiopam esse aiunt aut Andromacham, cum nos ne suspicemur quidem.* The other is still more express. In his piece, entitled *Orator*,

speaking of the negligence of the Roman writers, in respect of *numbers*, he observes, *that there were even many passages in their tragedies, which, unless the* TIBIA *played to them, could not be distinguished from mere prose: quæ, nisi cum Tibicen accesserit, orationi sint solutæ simillima.* One of these passages is expresly quoted from *Thyestes*, a tragedy of *Ennius*; and, as appears from the measure, taken out of one of the acts. It is clear then, that the *Tibia* was certainly used in the *declamation* of tragedy. But now the song of the tragic chorus, being of the nature of the ode, of course required *Fides*, the lyre, the peculiar and appropriated instrument of the lyric Muse. And this is clearly collected, if not from express testimonies; yet from some occasional hints dropt by the ancients. For, 1. the lyre, we are told, [Cic. De Leg. ii. 9. & 15.] and is agreed on all hands, was an instrument of the Roman theatre; but it was not employed in comedy. This we certainly know from the short accounts of the music prefixed to Terence's plays. 2. Further, the *Tibicen*, as we saw, accompanied the declamation of the acts in tragedy. It remains then, that the proper place of the lyre was, where one should naturally look for it, in the songs of the chorus; but we need not go further than this very passage for a proof. It is unquestionable, that the poet is here speaking of the chorus only; the following lines not admitting any other possible interpretation. By *Fidibus* then is necessarily understood

the instrument peculiarly used in it. Not that it need be said that the *Tibia* was never used in the chorus. The contrary seems expressed in a passage of Seneca, [Ep. lxxxiv.] and in Julius Pollux [l. iv. 15. § 107.] 'Tis sufficient, if the *lyre* was used solely, or principally in it, at this time. In this view, the whole digression is more pertinent and connects better. The poet had before been speaking of tragedy. All his directions, from l. 100. respect this species of the drama only. The application of what he had said concerning music, is then most naturally made, 1. to the *Tibia*, the music of the acts; and, 2. to *Fides*, that of the choir: thus confining himself, as the tenor of this part required, to tragedy only. Hence is seen the mistake, not only of M. Dacier, whose comment is in every view insupportable; but, as was hinted, of Heinsius, Lambin, and others, who, with more probability, explained this of the Roman comedy and tragedy. For though *Tibia* might be allowed to stand for comedy, as opposed to *Tragœdia*, [as in fact, we find it in l. ii. Ep. 1. 98.] that being the only instrument employed in it; yet, in speaking expresly of the music of the stage, *Fides* could not determinately enough, and in contradistinction to *Tibia*, denote that of tragedy, it being an instrument used solely, or principally in the chorus; of which, the context shews, he alone speaks. It is further to be observed, that, in the application here made, besides the music, the poet takes in the other improvements of the

tragic chorus, these happening, as from the nature of the thing they would do, at the same time.

214. SIC PRISCAE MOTUMQUE ET LUXURIEM.] These two words are employed to express that *quicker movement*, and *richer modulation* of the new music; the peculiar defects of the *old* being, 1. That it moved too slowly, and, 2. That it had no compass or variety of notes. It was that *movement*, that velocity and vehemence of the music, which Roscius required to have slackened in his old age.

215. TRAXITQUE VAGUS PER PULPITA VESTEM.] This expresses not only the improvement arising from the ornament of proper dresses, but from the grace of motion: not only the *actor*, whose peculiar office it was, but the *minstrel* himself, as appears from hence, conforming his gesture in some sort to the music.

Of the use and propriety of these gestures, or dances, it will not be easy for us, who see no such things attempted on the modern stage, to form any very clear or exact notions. What we cannot doubt of is, 1. That the several theatrical dances of the ancients were strictly conformable to the genius of the different species of composition, to which they were applied. 2. That, therefore, the tragic dance, which more especially accompanied the chorus, must have been expressive of the highest gravity and decorum, tending to inspire ideas of what is *becom-*

*ing, graceful,* and *majestic;* in which view we cannot but perceive the important assistance it must needs lend to virtue, and how greatly it must contribute to set all her graces and attractions in the fairest light. 3. This idea of the ancient tragic dance, is not solely formed upon our knowledge of the conformity, beforementioned; but is further collected from the name, usually given to it, which was Εμμέλεια. This word cannot well be translated into our language; but expresses all that grace and concinnity of motion, which the dignity of the choral song required. 4. Lastly, it must give us a very high notion of the moral effect of this dance, when we find the severe Plato admitting it into his commonwealth.

216. SIC FIDIBUS ETIAM VOCES, &c.] He is here speaking of the great improvement in the tragic chorus, after the Roman conquests, when the Latin writers began to enquire

*Quid Sophocles et Thespis et Æschylus utile ferrent.*

This improvement consisted, 1. In a more instructive moral sentiment: 2. In a more sublime and animated expression; which of course produced, 3. A greater vehemence in the declamation: to which conformed, 4. A more numerous and rapid music. All these particulars are here expressed, but, as the reason of the thing required, in an inverted order. The music of the lyre (that being his subject, and

introducing the rest) being placed first; the declamation, as attending that, next; the language, *facundia*, that is, the subject of the declamation, next; and the sentiment, *sententia*, the ground and basis of the language, last.

*Et tulit eloquium insolitum facundia præceps.*

literally, "A vehemence and rapidity of language "produced an unusual vehemence and rapidity of "elocution in the declaimer!" This "rapidity of lan-"guage," is exactly the same, as that Cicero speaks of in Democritus and Plato, [*Orat.* 638. *Elz.*] which, because of its quick and rapid movement, *quod incitatius feratur*, some critics thought to be poetical. *Unaccustomed*, we may observe, is indifferently a *censure* or *encomium*, according as the preceding state of the thing spoken of was *wrong*, or *right*. Much the same may be concluded of *præceps*; its *literal* sense is a degree of *motion* in any thing above what it had before. This may be *excessive*, or otherwise, as it chances: When applied to *the bleak East wind, dispersing a flight of bees, and dashing them on the stream,*

*si forte morantes*
*Sparserit, aut præceps Neptuno immerserit Eurus.*
Virg. Georg. iv. 29.

the epithet implies *excess*; but when spoken of the *gentle South, whose strongest gale is but sufficient to drive the willing ship to port*, [Æn. vii. 410.] *Præcipiti delata Noto*, it then only expresses *due measure*.

As for the criticism from Quintilian, who opposes *præcipitia* to *sublimibus*, it is doubly impertinent: 1. As the sense is necessarily fixed by its opposition to *sublimibus*: and 2. As the word is here used, not as implying *motion*, but *height*, in which view its sense is *absolute*, and always denotes *excess*.

218. UTILIUMQUE SAGAX RERUM, ET DIVINA FUTURI, SORTILEGIS NON DISCREPUIT SENTENTIA DELPHIS.] It is amazing that these two lines should ever have been misunderstood as a censure, the import of them being highly *encomiastic*, yet with great exactness declaring the specific boast and excellence of the chorus; which lay, as Heinsius hath well observed, 1. In inculcating important moral lessons; and 2. In delivering useful presages and monitions concerning future conduct, with an almost oracular prudence and authority.

SIC PRISCAE — — — — ARTI.

What hath chiefly misled the Critics in their explanation of this place, I suspect to have been the frequent encomiums on the severity of the ancient music, by the Greek and Latin writers. Though here they seem to have overlooked two very material considerations: 1. That the *former* have chiefly treated the subject in a *moral* or *political* view, and therefore preferred the ancient music only as it was conceived to influence the public manners. For this reason Plato, one of the chief of those *encomiasts*, applauds, as we find, the practice of Ægypt, in

suffering no change of her poetry, but continuing, to his time, her fondness for the *Songs of Isis* [De Leg. l. ii. sub. init.] which just as much infers the perfection of those songs, considered in a critical view, as Rome's sticking to her *Saliar verses* would have shewn those poor, obscure orisons to have exceeded the regular odes and artificial compositions of Horace. And it was this kind of criticism which, as I suppose, the poet intended to expose in the famous verses, which I explain in note on v. 202.

2. That the *latter*, the principal of them at least, who talk in the same strain, lived under the Emperors; in whose time, indeed, music had undergone a miserable prostitution, *being broken*, as one of the best of those writers complains, *into an effeminate and impure delicacy — In scenis effeminata et impudicis modis fracta*, [Quint. I. l. x.] As to the times in question, I know but of one passage, which clearly and expresly condemns the music then in vogue; and that will admit of some alleviation from its being found in a treatise concerning laws. The passage I mean is in Cicero, [De Leg. l. ii. 15.] who, following Plato in his high-flown principles of legislation, exclames, *Illa quæ solebant quondam compleri severitate jucunda Livianis et Nævianis modis; nunc ut eadem exultent, cervices oculosque pariter cum* MODORUM FLEXIONIBUS *torqueant!* For the *severitas jucunda* of the music, to which Livius's plays were set, it may be tolerably guessed from hence, that he was the *first* who brought a

written Play upon the stage; *i. e.* the first writer whose plays were acted to a regular and precomposed music. And it is not, we know, very usual for the first essays in any art to be perfect. It should seem then, that the *flexiones modorum*, as opposed to the plainness of the old music, are here condemned, not so much in the view of a critic, estimating the true state of the stage; but, as was hinted, of a legislator, treading in the steps of Plato. Though indeed I have no doubt, that the music in those times was much changed, and had even suffered some degree of corruption. This I infer, not so much from any express authorities that have occurred, as from the general state of those times, which were degenerating apace into the worst morals, the sure forerunners of a corrupt and vitiated music; for, though it may indeed, in its turn, and doubtless does, when established, contribute much to help on the public depravity, yet that depravity itself is originally not the *effect*, but the *cause* of a bad music; as is more than hinted to be Cicero's real opinion in the place referred to, where, observing that the manners of many Greek states had kept pace with their music, he adds, that they had undergone this change, *Aut hac dulcedine corruptelaque depravati, ut quidam putant; aut cum severitas eorum ob alia vitia cecidisset, tum fuit in auribus animisque mutatis etiam huic mutationi locus.* [Leg. ii. 15.] But be this as it will, Horace, as we have seen, is no way concerned in the dispute about the ancient music.

219. SENTENTIA DELPHIS.] *Sententia* is properly *an aphorism taken from life, briefly representing either what is, or what ought to be the conduct of it: Oratio sumpta de vita, quæ aut quid sit, aut quid esse oporteat, in vita, breviter ostendit.* [Ad Herenn. Rhet. l. iv.] These aphorisms are here mentioned, as constituting the peculiar praise and beauty of the chorus. This is finely observed, and was intended to convey an oblique censure on the practice of those poets, who stuff out every part of the drama alike with moral sentences, not considering, that the only proper receptacle of them is the chorus, where indeed they have an extreme propriety; it being the peculiar office and character of the chorus to moralize. In the course of the action they should rarely be used; and that for the plain reason assigned by the author, just quoted, [for the rule holds on the stage, as well as at the bar] *Ut rei actores, non vivendi præceptores, esse videamur.* That there was some ground for this reproof of the Roman drama, is collected from the few remaining fragments of the old Latin plays, which have much of this sententious cast, and from what Quintilian expresly tells us of the old Latin poets, whose fame, it seems, was principally raised upon this merit. *Tragœdiæ scriptores, Accius et Pacuvius, clarissimi gravitate sententiarum, &c.* [l. x. c. i.] To how intolerable an extreme this humour of moralizing in plays was afterwards carried, Seneca has given us an example.

But here a question will be started, "Why then "did the Greeks moralize so much, or, if we con-"demn *Accius* and *Seneca*, how shall we defend "*Sophocles* and *Euripides*?" An ingenious [g] modern hath taken some pains to satisfy this difficulty, and in part, I think, hath succeeded. His solution, in brief, is, "That the moral and political "aphorisms of the Greek stage generally contained "some apt and interesting allusion to the state of "public affairs, which was easily catched by a quick, "intelligent auditory; and not a dry, affected moral, "without further meaning, as for the most part was "that of the Latins." This account is not a little confirmed by particular instances of such acknowledged allusions, as well as from reflexions on the genius and government of the Athenians, at large. But this, though it goes some way, does not fully extricate the matter. The truth is, these sentences are too thick sown in the Greek writers, to be fully accounted for from the single consideration of their democratical views. Not to observe, that the very choice of this *medium* for the conveyance of their political applications, presupposes the prior acknowledged use and authority of it. I would then account for it in the following manner.

I. In the virtuous simplicity of less polished times, this spirit of moralizing is very prevalent; the good

g P. Brumoy, Disc. sur le parall. des Theat. p. 165. Amst. 1732.

sense of such people always delighting to shew itself in sententious or proverbial γνῶμαι, or observations. Their character, lik that of the clown in Shakespear, is *to be very swift and sententious.* [As you like it, Act v. sc. 1.] This is obvious to common experience, and was long since observed by the *philosopher*, οἱ ἄγροικοι μάλιςα γνωμοτύποι εἰσὶ, καὶ ῥᾳδίως ἀποφαίνονται, [Arist. Rhet. l. ii. c. 21.] an observa ion, which of itself accounts for the practice of the elder poets in Greece, as in all other nations. A custom, thus introduced, is not easily laid aside, especially when the oracular cast of these sentences, so fitted to *strike*, and the moral views of writers themselves (which was more particularly true of the old dramatists) concurred to favour this taste. But, 2. there was added to this, more especially in the age of Sophocles and Euripides, a general prevailing fondness for moral wisdom, which seems to have made the fashionable study of men of all ranks in those days; when schools of philosophy were resorted to for recreation as well as instruction, and a knowledge in morals was the supreme accomplishment in vogue: The fruit of these philosophical conferences would naturally shew itself in certain brief, sententious conclusions, which would neither contradict the fashion, nor, it seems, offend against the ease and gaiety of conversation in those times. *Schools* and *pedantry*, *morals* and *austerity*, were not so essentially connected, in their combinations of ideas, as they have been since; and a sensible

moral truth might have fallen from any mouth, without disgracing it. Nay, which is very remarkable, the very *scholia*, as they were called, or drinking catches of the Greeks, were seasoned with this moral turn; the sallies of pleasantry, which escaped them in their freest hours, being tempered for the most part, by some strokes of this national sobriety. "During the course of their entertainments, says "Athenæus, [l. xv. c. 14.] they loved to hear, from "some wise and prudent person, an agreeable song: "and those songs were held by them most agreeable, "which contained exhortations to virtue, or other "instructions relative to their conduct in life."

And to give the reader a taste of these *moral* songs, I will take leave to present him with a very fine one, written by no less a person than Aristotle himself; and the rather, as I have it in my power to present him, at the same time, with an elegant translation of it. But its best recommendation will be that it comes from the same hand which has so agreeably entertained us of late with some spirited imitations of Horace[h].

Ἀρετὰ πολύμοχθε γένει βροτείῳ,
Θήραμα κάλλιςον βίῳ.
Σᾶς περί, Παρθένε, μορφᾶς
Καὶ θανεῖν ζηλωτὸς ἐν Ἑλλάδι πότμος,
Καὶ πόνες τλῆναι μαλερὲς ἀκάμαντας.

[h] *Imitations of Horace* by Thomas Nevile, M. A. Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, 1758.

Τοῖον ἐπὶ φρένα βάλλεις καρπὸν εἰς ἀθάνατον,
Χρυσῶ τε κρέσσω καὶ γονέων,
Μαλακαυγητοῖό θ' ὕπνου.
Σῆ δ' ἕνεκ' ἐκ Διὸς Ἡρακλέης
Λήδας τε κοῦροι πόλλ' ἀνέτλασαν,
Ἔργοις σὰν ἀγορεύοντες δύναμιν.
Σοῖς τε πόθοις Ἀχιλλεὺς
Αἴας τ' αἴδαο δόμους ἦλθον·
Σᾶς δ' ἕνεκα φιλίας μορφᾶς
Ἀταρνέως ἔντροφος
Ἀελίου χήρωσεν αὐγάς.
Τοίγαρ ἀοίδιμον ἔργοις,
Ἀθάνατόν τε μιν αὐξήσουσι μοῦσαι,
Μναμοσύνας θύγατρες,
Διὸς ξενίου σέβας αὔξουσαι
Φιλίας τε γέρας βεβαίου[i].

[i] There is a considerable difference in the copies of this ode, as given us in the best editions of Athenæus and Diogenes Laertius. But the SIXTH verse is, in all of them, so inexplicable, in respect of the *measure*, the *construction*, and the *sense*, that I have no doubt of its being extremely corrupt. In such a case one may be indulged in making conjectures. And the following one, by a learned person, exactly skilled in the proprieties as well as elegancies of the Greek language, is so reasonable, that I had almost ventured to give it a place in the text.

The Poet had been celebrating v. 3. the divine *form* of virtue; which inspired the Grecian youth with an invincible courage and contempt of danger. It was natural therefore to conclude his panegyric with some such Epiphonema as this: "Such a passion "do'st thou kindle up in the minds of men!"

To justify this passion, he next turns to the *fruits*, or advantages which virtue yields; which, he tells us, are more excellent

I.

Hail, Virtue! Goddess! sov'reign Good,
By man's bold race with pain pursu'd!
Where'er thou dart'st thy radiant eye,
Greece sees her sons with transport fly;
Danger before thee disappears,
And death's dark frown no terror wears.

II.

So full into the breast of man descends
Thy rich ambrosial show'r;
A show'r, that gold, that parents far transcends,
Or, sleep's soft-soothing pow'r.

than those we receive from any other possession, whether of *wealth, nobility,* or *ease,* the three great idols of mankind. Something like this we collect from the obscure glimmerings of sense that occur to us from the common reading,

Τοῖον ἐπὶ φρένα βάλλεις καρπόν τ' εἰς ἀθάναλον,
Χρυσῷ τε κρέσσω, &c.

But it is plain, then, that a very material word must have dropt out of the *first* part of the line, and that there is an evident corruption in the *last.* In a word, the whole passage may be reformed thus,

Τοῖον ἐπὶ φρένι ΕΡΩΤΑ βάλλεις.
Καρπὸν ΦΕΡΕΙΣ ἀθάναλον
Κρυσῷ τε κρέσσω καὶ γονέων,
Μαλακαυγηλοῖό Θ' ὕπνου.

It need not be observed how easily καρπὸν ΤΕΕΙΣ is changed into καρπὸν ΦΕΡΕΙΣ: And as to the restored word ἔρωλα, besides the necessity of it to complete the sense, it exactly suits with σοῖς τε πόθοις in v. 12. Lastly, the *measure* will now sufficiently justify itself to the learned reader.

III.

By thee ALCIDES soar'd to fame,
Thy influence LEDA's twins proclaim;
Heroes for thee have dauntless trod
The dreary paths of hell's abode;
Fir'd by thy form, all beamy bright,
Atarneus' nursling left the light.

IV.

His deeds, his social love (so will the nine,
Proud to spread wide the praise
Of friendship and of friendly Jove) shall shine
With ever-living rays.

This moralizing humour, so prevalent in those times, is, I dare be confident, the true source of the sententious cast of the Greek dramatic writers, as well as of that sober air of moral, which, to the no small disgust of modern writers, is spread over all their poets. Not but there would be some difference in those poets themselves, and in proportion as they had been more or less conversant in the Academy, would be their relish of this moral mode; as is clearly seen in the case of Euripides, that philosopher of the stage, as the Athenians called him, and who is characterized by Quinctilian, as *sententiis densus, et in iis, quæ a sapientibus tradita sunt, pæne ipsis par.* [L. x. c. 1.] Yet still the fashion was so general, that no commerce of the world could avoid, or wholly get clear of it; and therefore

Sophocles, though his engagements in the state kept him at a greater distance from the schools, had yet his share of this philosophical humour. Now this apology for the practice of the Greek poets doth by no means extend to the Roman; Philosophy having been very late, and never generally, the taste of Rome.

Cicero says, *Philosophia quidem tantum abest ut proinde, ac de hominum est vitâ merita, laudetur, ut a plerisque neglecta, a multis etiam vituperetur.* In another place he tells us, that in his time Aristotle was not much known, or read, even by the philosophers themselves. [*Cic. Top. sub init.*]

And, though in the age of Seneca, *Sentences*, we know, were much in use, yet the cast and turn of them evidently shew them to have been the affectation of the lettered *few*, and not the *general* mode and practice of the time. For the quaintness, in which Seneca's aphorisms are dressed, manifestly speaks the labour and artifice of the closet, and is just the reverse of that easy, simple expression, which cloaths them in the Greek poets, thus demonstrating their familiar currency in common life. Under any other circumstances than these, the practice, as was observed, must be unquestionably faulty; except only in the chorus, where for the reason before given, it may always, with good advantage, be employed.

220. CARMINE QUI TRAGICO, &c.] The connexion with v. 201, from whence the poet had digressed, is worth observing. The digression had been taken up in describing the improved state of dramatic music; the application of which to the case of tragedy, brings him round again to his subject, the tragic chorus; to which alone, as hath been observed, the two last lines refer. This too is the finest preparation of what follows. For to have passed on directly from the *tibia* to the *satyrs*, had been abrupt and inartificial; but from *tragedy*, the transition is easy, the *satyrs* being a species of the tragic drama. That it was so accounted may be seen from the following passage in Ovid,

*Est et in obscœnos deflexa tragœdia risus,*
*Multaque præteriti verba pudoris habet.*
Trist. l. ii. v. 409.

For the *tragedy*, here referred to, cannot be the regular Roman tragedy. *That* he had distinctly considered before, and, besides, it in no age admitted, much less in this, of which we are speaking, so intolerable a mixture. As little can it be understood of the proper Atellane fable, for besides that Ovid is here considering the *Greek* drama only, the Atellane was ever regarded as a species, not of tragedy, but comedy: The authority of Donatus is very express; "*Comœdiarum* formæ sunt tres: Palliatæ, Togatæ, *Atellanæ*, salibus et jocis compositæ, quæ in se non habent nisi vetustam elegantiam." [Prol. in Terent.]

And Athenæus [l. vi.] speaking of some pieces of this sort, which L. Sylla had composed, calls them σατυρικὰς κωμῳδίας, satyric comedies; *comedies*, because, as Donatus says, "salibus et jocis compositæ:" and *satyric*, not that satyrs were introduced in them, but, according to Diomedes, from their being "argumentis dictisque *similes* satyricis fabulis Græcis." Of what then can Ovid be understood to speak, but the true satyric piece, which was always esteemed, and, as appears from the Cyclops, in fact is, what Demetrius [περὶ ἑρμηνείας] elegantly calls it, τραγῳδία παιζέσα, a lighter kind of *tragedy*; the very name, which Horace, as well as Ovid in this place, gives to it? But this is further clear from the instance quoted by Ovid, of this loose tragedy; for he proceeds:

*Nec noceet autori, mollem qui fecit Achillem,*
*Infregisse suis fortia facta modis.*

which well agrees to the idea of a satyric piece, and, as Vossius takes notice, seems to be the very same subject, which Athenæus and others tell us, Sophocles had work'd into a satyric tragedy, under the title of Ἀχιλλέως ἐρασαί.

221. Mox etiam, &c.] It is not the intention of these notes to retail the accounts of others. I must therefore refer the reader, for whatever concerns the history of the satyric, as I have hitherto done, of the tragic, and comic drama, to the numerous dissertators on the ancient stage; and above all, in

the case before us, to the learned Casaubon; from whom all that hath been said to any purpose, by modern writers, hath been taken. Only it will be proper to observe one or two particulars, which have been greatly misunderstood, and without which it will be impossible, in any tolerable manner, to explane what follows.

I. The design of the poet, in these lines, is not to fix the origin of the satyric piece, in ascribing the invention of it to Thespis. This hath been concluded, without the least warrant from his own words, which barely tell us, "that the Representa-"tion of tragedy was in elder Greece, followed by "the *satyrs*;" and indeed the nature of the thing, as well as the testimony of all antiquity, shews it to be impossible. For the *satyr* here spoken of, is, in all respects, a regular drama, and therefore could not be of earlier date, than the times of Æschylus, when the constitution of the drama was first formed. 'Tis true indeed, there was a kind of entertainment of much greater antiquity, which by the ancients is sometimes called *satyric*, out of which (as Aristotle assures us) tragedy itself arose, ἡ δὲ τραγῳδία, διὰ τὸ ἐκ σατυρικῶν μεταβαλεῖν, ὀψὲ ἀπεσεμνύνθη, [περ. ποιητ. κ. δ.] But then this was nothing but a chorus of satyrs [Athenæus, l. xiv.] celebrating the festivals of *Bacchus*, with rude songs, and uncouth dances; and had little resemblance to that, which was afterwards called *satyric*; which, except that it retained the chorus of satyrs, and turned

upon some subject relative to Bacchus, was of a quite different structure, and, in every respect, as regular a composition, as tragedy itself.

II. There is no doubt but the poem, here distinguished by the name of SATYRI, was in actual use on the Roman stage. This appears from the turn of the poet's whole criticism upon it. Particularly, his address to the Pisos, v. 235. and his observation of the offence which a loose dialogue in this drama would give to a *Roman* auditory, v. 248. make it evident that he had, in fact, the practice of his own stage in view. It hath, however, been questioned, whether by *Satyri* we are to understand the proper Greek *Satyrs*, or the Latin *Atellane* fable, which, in the main of its character, very much resembled that drama. If the authority of Diomedes be any thing, the *former* must be the truth, for he expresly asserts, "that the Satyric and Atellane pieces, though "similar in the general cast of their composition, "differed in this essential point, that the persons in "the former were satyrs, in the other, not." [L. iii, c. De poëm. gen.] Now the poet expresly tells us, the Persons in the drama he is here describing, were *Satyrs*, and accordingly delivers rules for the regulation of their characters. As to the *Atellane*, according to the way in which Vossius reads the words of Diomedes, the characters were *Oscan*, *personæ Oscæ*, which is very probable, not so much for the reasons assign'd by this Critic (for they are indeed very frivolous) but because, as it

should seem from a passage in Strabo, [Lib. v. 233.] the language of the Osci was used in these Atellanes, and therefore common sense would require, that the persons also introduced should be Oscan. The difficulty is to know how it happened that, in a work written purposely to reform the Roman stage, the poet should say nothing of one species, the *Atellane*, which was of great authority and constant use at Rome, and yet say so much of another, the *Satyrs*, which was properly a Greek entertainment and certainly much less cultivated by the Roman poets. The plain solution of the matter, is, that, when now the Romans were become acquainted with the Greek models, and had applied themselves to the imitation of them, these Oscan characters were exchanged for the Greek satyrs, which they before resembled in the main parts of their character; and which appear, on other occasions, to have been no strangers at Rome; as we collect from the Sileni and Satyrs making a part (as Dionysius relates it) in their triumphal processions. So that this change of the Oscan persons for *Satyrs* is to be considered only as an improvement of the old *Atellane*, and not the introduction of an intirely new drama. In every other respect the precepts here given for the regulation of the *Satyrs* are such as would equally serve to improve the *Atellane*. The probable reason why the poet chose to insist so much on this alteration, or rather why he laboured so strenuously to *support* it, will be given in its place. In the

mean time supposing his view to have been this of countenancing the introduction of *satyric persons* into the Atellane (and that they were, in fact, introduced, we learn from an express authority[1]) every thing said on the subject will not only be pertinent and agreeable to what is here taught to be the general tenor of the epistle, but will be seen to have an address and contrivance, which will very much illustrate this whole part, and recommend it to the exact reader.

But before I quit this subject of the Atellane fable it will be proper to observe, That when I every where speak of it, as of early original, and ancient use on the Roman stage, I am not unmindful that Velleius Paterculus speaks of Pomponius as the Inventor of this Poem; which, if taken in the strict sense, will bring the date of it very low. "Sane "non ignoremus eâdem ætate fuisse Pomponium, "sensibus celebrem, verbis rudem, et *novitate in-* "*venti a se operis* commendabilem." L. ii. c. ix. For the age he is speaking of is that of SYLLA. But the authorities for the high antiquity of the Atellane fable are so express, that, when Pomponius is called the *Inventor* of it, it is but as Horace calls Lucilius the Inventor of the Roman Satire. That is, he made so considerable a change in the form and conduct of this poem, as to run away with all the

[1] *Agite, fugite, quatite, Satyri:* A verse cited from one of these Latin satyrs by Marius Victorinus.

honour of it. The improvements made by Lucilius in Satire have been taken notice of in the *Introduction*. And it happens that a curious passage in Athenæus will let us into the Improvements made by Pomponius in the Atellanes.

But first we are to understand that this sort of entertainment, as the name speaks, was imported to Rome from ATELLA, a town of the OSCI in Campania; and that the Dialect of that people was constantly and *only* used in it, even when the Osci themselves had ceased to be a people. This we learn from Strabo. ΟΣΚΩΝ ἐκλελοιπότων, ἡ διάλεκτος μένει παρὰ τοῖς Ρωμαίοις· ὥςε καὶ ποιήματα σκηνοβατεῖσθαι κατά τινα ἀγῶνα πάτριον καὶ μιμολογεῖσθαι. L. v. 233.

The OSCAN language, we see, was made use of in the Atellane plays, just as the Welsh, or some Provincial Dialect, is often employed in our Comedies.

But now we learn from Athenæus that L. Sylla writ some of these Atellanes in the ROMAN LANGUAGE. ὑπ' αὐτῶ γραφεῖσαι σατυρικαὶ κωμῳδίαι ΤΗΙ ΠΑΤΡΩΩΙ ΦΩΝΗΙ. [L. vi. p. 261. Ed. Casaub.] The difficulty then clears up. For the Pomponius whom Velleius speaks of was contemporary with L. Sylla. So that to give any propriety to the term of *Inventor*, as applied to Pomponius, we must conclude that he was the *first* person who set this example of composing Atellane plays in the vulgar dialect: which took so much that he was even fol-

lowed in this practice by the Roman General. This account of the matter perfectly suits with the encomium given to Pomponius. He would naturally, on such an alteration, endeavour to give this buffoon sort of Comedy a more rational cast: And this reform of itself would entitle him to great honour. Hence the SENSIBUS CELEBRIS of Paterculus[k]. But to preserve some sort of resemblance (which the people would look for) to the old Atellane, and not to strip it of all the pleasantry arising from the barbarous dialect, he affected, it seems, the *antique* in the turn of his expression. Hence the other part of his character (which in the politer age of Paterculus grew offensive to nice judges) VERBIS RUDIS.

The conclusion is, That the Atellane Fable was in its first rude form and Oscan Dialect of ancient use at Rome, where it was admitted, as Strabo speaks, ΚΑΤΑ ΤΙΝΑ ΑΓΩΝΑ ΠΑΤΡΙΟΝ: That Pomponius afterwards *reformed* its barbarities, and brought it on the Stage in a *Roman* dress; which together were thought so great improvements, that

k This, I think, must be the interpretation of *sensibus celebrem*, supposing it to be the true reading. But a learned critic has shewn with great appearance of reason, that the text is corrupt and should be reformed into *sensibus* CELEREM. According to which reading the encomium here past on Pomponius must be understood of his *Wit*, and not the gravity of his moral Sentences. Either way his title to the honour of Invention is just the same.—See a Specimen of a new Edition of Paterculus in BIBLIOTHEQUE BRITANNIQUE, *Juillet*, &c. 1736.

later writers speak of him as the INVENTOR of this Poem. But to return to our proper subject, the *Greek Satyrs.*

III. For the absolute merit of these satyrs, the reader will judge of it himself by comparing the Cyclops, the only piece of this kind remaining to us from antiquity, with the rules here delivered by Horace. Only it may be observed, in addition to what the reader will find elsewhere [*n.* v. 223.] apologized in its favour, that the double character of the satyrs admirably fitted it, as well for a sensible entertainment to the wise, as for the sport and diversion of the vulgar. For while the grotesque appearance, and jesting vein of these fantastic personages amused the one; the other saw much further; and considered them, at the same time, as replete with science, and informed by a spirit of the most abstruse wisdom. Hence important lessons of civil prudence, interesting allusions to public affairs, or a high, refined moral, might, with the highest probability, be insinuated, under the slight cover of a rustic simplicity. And from this instructive cast, which from its nature must be very obscure, if not impenetrable, to us at this day, was, I doubt not, derived the principal pleasure which the ancients found in this species of the drama. If the modern reader would conceive any thing of the nature and degree of this pleasure, he may in part guess at it, from reflecting on the entertainment he himself receives from the characters of the clowns in Shake-

spear; *who*, as the poet himself hath characterized them, *use their folly, like a stalking horse, and, under the presentation of that, shoot their wit.* [As you like it.]

221. AGRESTIS SATYROS, &c.] It hath been shewn, that the poet could not intend, in these lines, to *fix the origin of the satyric drama.* But, though this be certain, and the dispute concerning that point be thereby determined, yet is it to be noted, that he purposely describes the satyr in its ruder and less polished form; glancing even at some barbarities, which deform the Bacchic chorus; which was properly the satyric piece, before Æschylus had, by his regular constitution of the drama, introduced it, under a very different form on the stage. The reason of this conduct is given in *n.* on v. 203. Hence the propriety of the word *nudavit*, which Lambin rightly interprets, *nudos introduxit Satyros*, the poet hereby expressing the monstrous indecorum of this entertainment in its first unimproved state. Alluding also to this ancient character of the *Satyr*, he calls him *asper*, i. e. rude and petulant; and even adds, that his jests were intemperate, and without the *least mixture of gravity.* For thus, upon the authority of a very ingenious and learned critic, I explane *incolumi gravitate*, i. e. rejecting every thing serious, bidding *farewell*, as we say, *to all gravity.* Thus [L. iii. O. 5.]

*Incolumi Jove et urbe Roma:*

*i. e.* bidding farewell to Jupiter [Capitolinus] and Rome; agreeably to what is said just before,

> *Anciliorum et nominis et togæ*
> OBLITUS, *æternæque Vestæ.*

or, as SALVUS is used still more remarkably in Martial [10. l. v.]

> *Ennius est lectus* SALVO *tibi, Roma, Marone:*
> *Et sua riserunt secula Mæonidem.*

*Farewell, all gravity,* is as remote from the original sense of the words *fare well,* as *incolumi gravitate* from that of *incolumis,* or *salvo Marone* from that of *salvus.*

223. INLECEBRIS ERAT ET GRATA NOVITATE MORANDUS SPECTATOR—] The poet gives us in these words the reason, why such gross Ribaldry, as we know the Atellanes consisted of, was endured by the politest age of Rome. Scenical representations, being then intended, not, as in our days, for the entertainment of the better sort, but on certain great solemnities, indifferently for the diversion of the whole city, it became necessary to consult the taste of the multitude, as well as of those, *quibus est equus, et pater et res.*

And this reason is surely sufficient to vindicate the poet from the censure of a late critic, who has fallen upon this part of the epistle with no mercy. "The poet, says he, spends a great number of "verses about these satyrs; but the subject itself is

"unworthy his pen. He, who could not bear the "elegant mimes of Laberius, that he should think "this farcical and obscene trash, worth his peculiar "notice, is somewhat strange." I doubt not, it appeared so to this writer, who neither considered the peculiar necessity of the satyric piece, nor attended to the poet's purpose and drift in this epistle. The former is the more extraordinary, because he hath told us, and rightly too, "that, to content the "people, the satyric was superadded to the tragic "drama." And he quotes a passage from Diomedes, which gives the same account, *Satyros induxerunt ludendi causa jocandique, simul ut spectator inter res tragicas seriasque satyrorum quoque jocis et ludis delectaretur.* Should not this have taught him, that what was so requisite to content the people, might deserve some notice from the poet? This *farcical trash* was chiefly calculated for those, who without the *enticement of so agreeable a change* in the entertainment of the day, would not have had patience to sit out the tragedy; which being intended for the gratification of the better sort, *urbani et honesti*, they, in their turn, required to be diverted in the only way, which was to the level of their taste, that of farce and pleasantry. And this I dare be confident, so great a patron of liberty, as this writer, will agree with me in thinking to be but reasonable in a free state; which ought to make some provision for the *few*, that may chance, even under such advantages, to want a truly critical spirit.

I hold then, that Horace acted, not only in the character of a good critic, but of a prudent man, and good citizen, in attempting to refine, what it had not been equitable, or was not in his power, wholly to remove. But 2. the learned critic as little attended to the drift of the epistle, as to the important use and necessity of the satyric drama. He must otherwise have seen, that, in an essay to improve and regulate the Roman theatre (which is the sole purpose of it) the poet's business was to take it, as it then stood, and to confine himself to such defects and abuses, as he found most likely to admit a correction, and not, as visionary projectors use, to propose a thorough reform of the public taste in every instance. The *Atellanes* had actual possession of the stage, and, from their antiquity, and other prejudices in their favour, as well as from the very design and end of their theatrical entertainments, would be sure to keep it. What had the poet then, in these circumstances, to do but, in pursuance of his main design, to encourage a reformation of that entertainment, which he was not at liberty absolutely, and under every shape, to reject. This he judged might most conveniently be done by adopting the Greek *Satyrs* instead of their own *Oscan* characters. With this change, though the Atellanes might not, perhaps, be altogether to his own taste, yet he hoped to render it a tolerable entertainment to the better sort. And this, in fact, it might have been by following the directions here given; part of which

were intended to free it from that *obscene and farcical trash*, which appears to have been no less offensive to the poet, than to this critic.

As for the so much applauded *mimes*, they had not, it is probable, at this time gained a footing on the stage, sufficient to entitle them to so much consideration. This was a new upstart species of the drama, which, though it had the common good-fortune of absurd novelties, to take with the great; yet was generally disapproved by men of better taste, and better morals. Cicero had passed a severe censure upon it in one of his epistles, [Ad famil. ix. 16.] which intimates, that it was of a more buffoon and ridiculous composition, than their Atellanes; whose place it began to be the fashion to supply with this ribaldry. And we collect the same thing from what Ovid observes of it in apology for the looseness of his own verses,

> *Quid si scripsissem* MIMOS *obscœna jocantes,*
> *Qui semper vetiti crimen amoris habent?*
>
> — — — — — — —
>
> *Nec satis incestis temerari vocibus* aures,
> *Assuescunt* oculi *multa pudenda pati.*
>
> Trist. l. ii. v. 497.

Horace, with this writer's leave, might therefore judge it better to retain the Atellanes under some restrictions, than adopt what was much worse. But the mimes of Laberius were quite another thing. They were all elegance. So J. Scaliger [Comment.

de Comœd. et Tragœd. c. vi.] and, after him, this writer, tells us; but on no better grounds, than that he wrote good Latin (though not always that, as may be seen in A. Gellius, l. xvi. c. 7.) and hath left a few elegant, moral scraps behind him. But what then? the kind of composition was ridiculous and absurd, and, in every view, far less tolerable, than the *satyrs* under the regulation of Horace. The latter was a regular drama, consisting of an intire fable, conducted according to the rules of probability and good sense, only dashed with a little extravagance for the sake of the mob. The character of the former hath been given above from unquestionable authorities. Accordingly Diomedes [iii. p. 488. ed. Putsch.] defines it to be *an irreverent and lascivious imitation of obscene acts—mimus est sermonis cujuslibet motus sine reverentia, vel factorum et turpium cum lascivia imitatio.* And Scaliger himself owns *veri mimi proprium esse quædam sordida ut affectet,* loc. cit. It seem, in short, to have been a confused medley of comic drollery on a variety of subjects, without any consistent order or design; delivered by one actor, and heightened with all the licence of obscene gesticulation. Its best character, as practised by its greatest master, Laberius, was that of being witty in a very bad way [Sen. Controv. l. iii. c. 18.] and its sole end and boast, *risu diducere rictum* [Hor. i. S. x. 7.] which, whatever virtue it may be, is not always a proof of much elegance. But I have spent too many words on a criticism, which the ingenious

author, I am persuaded, let fall unawares, and did not mean to give us as the result of a mature and well-weighed deliberation on this subject.

225. VERUM ITA RISORES, &c.] The connecting particle, *verum*, expresses the opposition intended between the original satyr and that which the poet approves. For having insinuated the propriety of the satyric shews, as well from the practice of Greece, as the nature of festival solemnities, the poet goes on to animadvert on their defects, and to prescribe such rules, in the conduct of them, as might render them a tolerable diversion, even to the better sort. This introduction of the subject hath no small art. For, there being at this time (as hath been shewn) an attempt to bring in the Greek satyrs, while the Atellane plays (as was likely) still held the affections of the people, the poet was not openly to reproach and discredit these; but, by a tacit preference, to support and justify the other. This is done with address. For, instead of criticising the Atellanes, which came directly in his way, after having closed his account of the Roman tragedy, he relates, as it were, incidentally, the practice of ancient Greece in exhibiting satyrs, and thence immediately passes on, without so much as touching on the other favourite entertainment, to offer some directions concerning the satyric drama.

227. Ne quicunque Deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros, &c.] Gods and Heroes were introduced as well into the satyric as tragic drama, and often the very same Gods and Heroes, which had born a part in the preceding tragedy: a practice, which Horace, I suppose, intended, by this hint, to recommend as most regular. This gave the serious, tragic air to the satyr. The comic arose from the *risor* and *dicax*, who was either a satyr himself, or some character of an extravagant, ridiculous cast, like a satyr. Of this kind, says Diomedes, from whom I take this account, are Autolychus and Burris: which last particular I mention for the sake of justifying a correction of the learned Casaubon. This great critic conjectured, that, instead of *Burris*, in this place, it should be read *Busiris*. His reason is "*nam Burris iste ex Græcorum poetis mihi non* "*notus*:" which reason hath more force, than appears at first sight. For the very nature of this diversion required, that the principal character of it should be well known, which it was scarce likely to be, if not taken from a common story in their poets. But Vossius objects, "*sed non ea fuerit persona ridicula*:" contrary to what the grammarian represents it. But how so? Busiris was a savage, inhospitable tyrant, who sacrificed strangers. And what should hinder this character from being made ridiculous, as well as Polypheme in the Cyclops? Their characters were not unlike. And, as is seen in that case, the ancients knew to set forth such

monsters of cruelty in a light, that rendered them equally absurd and detestable. This was agreeable to their humanity, which, by such representations, loved to cultivate a spirit of benevolence in the spectators; and shews the moral tendency of even the absurdest of the ancient dramatic shews. The objection of Vossius is then of no weight. But what further confirms the emendation of the excellent Casaubon, is a manuscript note on the margin of a printed copy of this book[o], which I have now by me, as it should seem, from his own hand, "*lectionem* "*vero quam restituimus etiam in optimo codice* "*Puteano postea invenimus.*" The learned reader will therefore, henceforth, look upon the text of *Diomedes*, in this place, as fully settled.

229. MIGRET IN OBSCURAS &c.—AUT, DUM VITAT &c.] The two faults, cautioned against, are 1. a too low, or vulgar expression, in the comic parts; and 2. a too sublime one, in the tragic. The *former* of these faults would almost naturally adhere to the first essays of the Roman satyrs, from the buffoon genius of the old Atellane: and the *latter*, from not apprehending the true measure and degree of the tragic mixture. To correct both these, the poet gives the exactest idea of the satyrs, in the image of a Roman matron, sharing in the mirth of a religious festival. The occasion obliged to some freedoms;

[o] In the library of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

and yet the dignity of her character demanded a decent reserve.

234. NON EGO INORNATA &c.] The scope of these lines may be to regulate the satyric style, by the idea of its character, before given, in the allusion to a Roman matron. Conformably to that idea, a plain, unornamented expression [from v. 234 to 236.] must not always be used. The three following lines inforce this general application by example.

If the exact reader find himself dissatisfied with this gloss, which seems the only one, the words, as they now stand, will bear, he may, perhaps, incline to admit the following conjecture, which proposes to read, instead of *inornata*, *honorata*. I. The context, I think, requires this change. For the two faults observed above [v. 229, 30.] were, 1. a too low expression, and, 2. a too lofty. Corresponding to this double charge, the poet having fixed the idea of this species of composition [v. 231, 2, 3.] should naturally be led to apply it to both points in questions: 1. to the comic part, in prescribing the true measure of its condescension, and, 2. to the tragic, in settling the true bounds of its elevation. And this, according to the reading here offered, the poet doth, only in an inverted order. The sense of the whole would be this,

1. *Non ego* HONORATA *et dominantia nomina solum*
*Verbaque, Pisones, satyrorum scriptor amabo;*

*i. e.* in the tragic scenes, I would not confine myself to such words only, as are in honour, and bear rule in tragic, and the most serious subjects; this stateliness not agreeing to the condescending levity of the satyr.

2. *Nec sic enitar tragico differre colori,*
*Ut nihil intersit Davusne loquatur, et audax*
*Pythias, emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,*
*An custos famulusque Dei Silenus alumni.*

*i. e.* nor, on the contrary, in the comic scenes, would I incur the other extreme of a too plain, and vulgar expression, this as little suiting its inherent matronlike dignity. But, II. this correction improves the *expression* as well as the *sense*. For besides the opposition, implied in the disjunctive, *nec*, which is this way restored, *dominantia* hath now its genuine sense, and not that strange and foreign one forced upon it out of the Greek language. As connected with *honorata*, it becomes a metaphor, elegantly pursued; and hath too a singular propriety, the poet here speaking of figurative terms. And then, for *honorata* itself, it seems to have been a familiar mode of expression with Horace. Thus [2 Ep. ii. 112.] *honore indigna vocabula* are such words as have *parum splendoris* and are *sine pondere*. And "*quæ sunt in honore vocabula*" is spoken of the contrary ones, such as are fit to enter into a serious tragic composition, in this very epistle, v. 71.

240. Ex noto fictum &c.] This precept [from v. 240 to 244] is analogous to that, before given [v. 129] concerning tragedy. It directs to form the satyrs out of a known subject. The reasons are, in general, the same for both. Only one seems peculiar to the satyrs. For the cast of them being necessarily romantic, and the persons, those fantastic beings, called satyrs, the τὸ ὅμοιον, or probable, will require the subject to have gained a popular belief, without which the representation must appear unnatural. Now these subjects, which have gained a popular belief, in consequence of old tradition, and their frequent celebration in the poets, are what Horace calls *nota;* just as newly invented subjects, or, which comes to the same thing, such as had not been employed by other writers, *indicta*, he, on a like occasion, terms *ignota*. The connexion lies thus. Having mentioned *Silenus* in v. 239, one of the commonest characters in this drama, an objection immediately offers itself; "but what "good poet will engage in subjects and characters "so trite and hackney'd?" The answer is, *ex noto fictum carmen sequar*, i. e. however trite and well known this and some other characters, essential to the satyr, are, and must be; yet will there be still room for fiction and genius to shew itself. The conduct and disposition of the play may be wholly new, and above the ability of common writers, *tantum series juncturaque pollet.*

244. SYLVIS DEDUCTI CAVEANT &c.] Having before [v. 232] settled the true idea of the satyric style in general, he now treats of the peculiar language of the satyrs themselves. This common sense demands to be in conformity with their sylvan character, neither affectedly tender and gallant, on the one hand; nor grossly and offensively obscene, on the other. The *first* of these cautions seems leveled at a false improvement, which, on the introduction of the Roman satyr, was probably attempted on the simple, rude plan of the Greek, without considering the rustic extraction and manners of the fauns and satyrs. The *latter*, obliquely glances at the impurities of the Atellane, whose licentious ribaldry, as hath been observed, would, of course, infect the first essays of the Roman satyr.

But these rules so necessary to be followed in the *satyric*, are (to observe it by the way) still more essential to the PASTORAL poem: the fortunes and character of which (though numberless volumes have been written upon it) may be given in few words.

The prodigious number of writings, called Pastoral, which have been current in all times, and in all languages, shews there is something very taking in this poem. And no wonder, since it addresses itself to THREE leading principles in human nature, THE LOVE OF EASE, THE LOVE OF BEAUTY, and THE MORAL SENSE: such pieces as these being employed in representing to us the TRANQUILLITY, the INNO-

CENCE, and the SCENERY, of the rural life. But though these ideas are of themselves agreeable, good sense will not be satisfied unless they appear to have some foundation in truth and nature. And even, then, their impression will be but faint, if they are not, further, employed to *convey instruction*, or *interest the heart*.

Hence the different *forms*, under which this poem hath appeared. THEOCRITUS thought it sufficient to give a *reality* to his pictures of the rural manners. But in so doing it was too apparent that his draught would often be coarse and unpleasing. And, in fact, we find that his shepherds, contrary to the poet's rule,

—— *immunda crepent ignominiosaque dicta.*

VIRGIL avoided this extreme. Without departing very widely from the simplicity of rustic nature, his shepherds are more decent, their lives more serene, and, in general, the scene more inviting. But the refinements of his age not well agreeing to these simple delineations, and his views in writing not being merely to *entertain*, he saw fit to allegorize these agreeable fancies, and make them the vehicles of *historical*, and sometimes even of *philosophic*, information.

Our SPENSER wanted to engross all the beauties of his masters: and so, to the artless and too natural drawing of the *Greek*, added the deep allegoric design of the *Latin*, poet.

One easily sees that this ænigmatic cast of the pastoral was meant to give it an air of instruction, and to make it a reasonable entertainment to such as would nauseate a sort of writing,

"Where pure description held the place of sense."

But this refinement was out of place, as not only inconsistent with the simplicity of the pastoral character, but as tending to rob us in a good degree of the *pleasure*, which these amusing and picturesque poems are intended to give.

Others therefore took another route. The famous TASSO, by an effort of genius which hath done him more honour than even his epic talents, produced a new kind of pastoral, by engrafting it on the drama. And under this form, pastoral poetry became all the vogue. The charming AMINTAS was even commented by the greatest scholars and critics. It was read, admired, and imitated by all the world.

There is no need to depreciate the fine copies that were taken of it, in Italy. But those by our own poets were, by far, the best. SHAKESPEARE had, indeed, set the example of something like pastoral dramas, in our language; and in his *Winter's Tale*, *As ye like it*, and some other of his pieces, has enchanted every body with his natural sylvan manners, and sylvan scenes. But FLETCHER set himself, in earnest, to emulate the Italian, yet still with an eye of reverence towards the English, poet. In his *faithful shepherdess* he surpasses the *former*;

in the variety of his paintings and the beauty of his scene; and only falls short of the *latter*, in the truth of manners, and a certain original grace of invention which no imitation can reach. The fashion was now so far established, that every poet of the time would try his hand at a pastoral. Even surly BEN, though he found no precedent for it among his ancients, was caught with the beauty of this novel drama, and, it must be owned, has written above himself in the fragment of his *sad shepherd*. —The scene, at length, was closed with the *Comus* of MILTON, who, in his rural paintings, almost equalled the simplicity and nature of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and, in the purity and splendor of his expression, outdid TASSO.

In this new form of the pastoral, what was childish before, is readily admitted and excused. A simple *moral* tale being the groundwork of the piece, the charms of description and all the embellishments of the scene are only subservient to the higher purpose of picturing the manners, or touching the heart.

But the good sense of Shakespeare, or perhaps the felicity of his genius, was admirable. Instead of the deep tragic air of Tasso (which has been generally followed) and his continuance of the pastoral strain, even to satiety, through *five* acts, he only made use of these playful images to enrich his comic scenes. He saw, I suppose, that pastoral subjects were unfit to bear a tragic distress. And besides,

when the distress rises to any height, the wantonness of pastoral imagery grows distasteful. Whereas the genius of comedy admits of humbler distresses; and leaves us at leisure to recreate ourselves with these images, as no way interfering with the draught of characters, or the management of a comic tale. But to make up in *surprize* what was wanting in *passion*, Shakespeare hath, with great judgment, adopted the popular system of Faeries; which, while it so naturally supplies the place of the old sylvan theology, gives a wildness to this sort of pastoral painting which is perfectly inimitable.

In a word; if Tasso had the honour of inventing the *pastoral drama*, properly so called, Shakespeare has shewn us the just application of *pastoral poetry;* which, however amusing to the imagination, good sense will hardly endure, except in a short dialogue, or in some occasional dramatic scenes; and in *these* only, as it serves to the display of characters and the conduct of the poet's plot.

And to confirm these observations on pastoral poetry, which may be thought too severe, one may observe that such, in effect, was the judgment passed upon it by that great critic, as well as wit, CERVANTES. He concludes his famous adventures, with a kind of project for his knight and squire *to turn shepherds:* an evident ridicule on the turn of that time for pastoral poems and romances, that were beginning to succeed to their books of heroic knight-errantry. Not, but it contains, also, a fine

stroke of *moral criticism*, as implying, what is seen from experience to be too true, that men capable of running into one enthusiasm are seldom cured of it but by some sudden diversion of the imagination, which drives them into another.

In conclusion, the reader will scarcely ask me, why, in this deduction of the history and genius of pastoral poetry, I have taken no notice of what has been written of this kind, in France; which, if it be not the most *unpoetical* nation in Europe, is at least the most *unpastoral*. Nor is their *criticism* of this poem much better than their execution. A late writer [p] indeed pronounces M. de Fontenelle's discourse on pastoral poetry *to be one of the finest pieces of criticism in the world*. For my part, I can only say it is rather more tolerable than his pastorals.

248. OFFENDENTUR ENIM QUIBUS EST EQUUS ET PATER ET RES.] The poet, in his endeavour to reclaim his countrymen from the *taste obscene*, very politely, by a common figure, represents that as being the *fact*, which he wished to be so. For what reception the rankest obscenities met with on the Roman stage we learn from Ovid's account of the success of the MIMI:

*Nobilis hos virgo matronaque, virque puerque,*
*Spectat : et è magnâ parte* senatus *adest.*
Trist. ii. v. 501.

[p] Mr. Hume, OF SIMPLICITY AND REFINEMENT.

This, indeed, was not till some time after the date of this epistle. But we may guess from hence what must have been the tendency of the general disposition, and may see to how little effect the poet had laboured to divert the public attention from the *Mimes* to his reformed *Atellanes*.

251. SYLLABA LONGA BREVI, &c.] This whole critique on the satyrs concludes with some directions about the Iambic verse. When the commentary asserts, that this metre was common to tragedy and the satyrs, this is not to be taken strictly; the satyrs, in this respect, as in every other, sustaining a sort of intermediate character betwixt tragedy and comedy. For, accurately speaking, their proper measure, as the Grammarians teach, was the Iambic enlivened with the tribrachys. "*Gaudent* [Victor. "l. ii. c. met. Iamb.] *trisyllabo pede et maxime* "*tribrache.*" Yet there was likeness enough to consider this whole affair of the metre under the same head. The Roman dramatic writers were very careless in their versification, which arose, as is hinted, v. 259, from an immoderate and undistinguishing veneration of their old poets.

In conclusion of all that has been delivered on the subject of these *satyrs*, it may be amusing to the learned reader to hear a celebrated French critic express himself in the following manner: "*Les* "*Romains donnoient* encore le nom de Satyre à "une espece de *Piece Pastorale*; qui tenoit, *dit on*

"le milieu entre la Tragedie et la Comedie. *C'est* "*tout ce que nous en sçavons.*" [*Mem. de l'Hist. des Belles Lett.* tom. xvii. p. 211.]

264. ET DATA ROMANIS VENIA EST INDIGNA POETIS.] It appears certainly, that what is said here concerning the metre of dramatic poems, was peculiarly calculated for the correction of the Roman negligence, and inaccuracy in this respect. This, if it had not been so expresly told us, would have been seen from the few remaining fragments of the old Latin plays, in which a remarkable carelessness of numbers is observed. This gives a presumption, that, with the like advantage of consulting them, it would also appear, that the rest of the poet's rules were directed to the same end, and that even such, as are delivered in the most absolute and general form, had a peculiar reference, agreeably to what is here taught of the plan of this poem, to the corresponding defects in the state of the Roman stage.

270. AT VESTRI PROAVI PLAUTINOS ET NUMEROS ET LAUDAVERE SALES; NIMIUM PATIENTER UTRUMQUE, NE DICAM STULTE, MIRATI;] It hath been thought strange, that Horace should pass so severe a censure on the *wit* of Plautus, which yet appeared to Cicero so admirable, that he speaks of it as *elegans, urbanum, ingeniosum, facetum.* [De Off. i. 29.] Nor can it be said, that this difference of judgment was owing to the improved delicacy of taste for wit,

in the Augustan age, since it doth not appear, that Horace's own jokes, when he attempts to divert us in this way, are at all better than Cicero's.

The common answer, so far as it respects the poet, is, I believe, the true one: "that endeavouring to "beat down the excessive veneration of the elder "Roman poets, and, among the rest (as appears "from 2 Ep. i. and A. P. 54.) of Plautus, he cen-"sures, without reserve, every the least defect in "his writings; though, in general, he agreed with "Cicero in admiring him." But then this was all. For that he was not so over-nice as to dislike Plautus' wit in the main, and, but in this view, probably had not criticized him at all, I collect from his express approbation of the wit of the old *comedy*; which certainly was not more delicate, than that of *Plautus*.

*ridiculum acri*
*Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res.*
*Illi, scripta quibus comœdia prisca viris est,*
*Hoc stabant,* HOC SUNT IMITANDI.

1 S. x. 15.

I know, it hath been thought, that, even in this very place, where he censures the wit of Plautus, he directs us *ad Græca exemplaria*, i. e. as his critics understand him, to Aristophanes, and the other writers of the old Comedy; but such a direction in this place, were altogether improper, and the supposition is, besides, a palpable mistake. For the

*Græca exemplaria* are referred to *only*, as models in exact versification, as the tenor of the place fully shews. And what Horace afterwards remarks on the wit of Plautus, in addition to the observations on metre, is a new and distinct criticism, and hath no kind of reference to the preceding direction. But still, as I said, Horace appears no such enemy to the old comic wit, as, without the particular reason assigned, to have so severely condemned it. The difficulty is to account for Cicero's so peculiar admiration of it, and that a taste, otherwise so exact, as his, should delight in the coarse humour of Plautus, and the old comedy. The case, I believe, was this:

Cicero had imbibed a strong relish of the frank and libertine wit of the old comedy, as best suited to the genius of popular eloquence; which, though it demands to be tempered with some urbanity, yet never attains its end so effectually, as when let down and accommodated, in some certain degree, to the general taste and manners of the people. This Cicero in effect owns, when he tells us, the main end of jesting at the bar [De Orat. ccxl.] is, not to acquire the credit of consummate humour, but to carry the cause, *ut proficiamus aliquid*: that is, *to make an impression on the people*; which is generally, we know, better done by a coarser joke, than by the elegance of refined raillery. And that this was the real ground of Cicero's preference of the old comedy to the new, may be concluded, not only

from the nature of the thing, and his own example (for he was ever reckoned intemperate in his jests, which by no means answer to the elegance of his character) but is certainly collected from what Quintilian, in his account of it, expresly observes of the old comedy, *Nescio an ulla poesis (post Homerum) aut similior sit oratoribus, aut ad oratores faciendos aptior.* The reason, doubtless, was, that *strength*, and *prompt and eloquent freedom*, *Vires et facundissima libertas*, which he had before observed, so peculiarly belonged to it.

And this, I think, will go some way towards clearing an embarrassing circumstance in the history of the Roman learning, which I know not, if any writer hath yet taken notice of. It is, that though Menander and the authors of the new comedy were afterwards admired, as the only masters of the comic drama, yet this does not appear to have been seen, or, at least, so fully acknowledged, by the Roman writers, till after the Augustan age; notwithstanding that the Roman taste was, from that time, visibly declining. The reason, I doubt not, was, that the popular eloquence, which continued, in a good degree of vigour, to that time, participating more of the freedom of the *old* comic banter, and rejecting, as improper to its end, the refinements of the *new*, insensibly depraved the public taste; which, by degrees only, and not till a studied and cautious declamation had, by the necessary influence of absolute power, succeeded to the liberty

of their old oratory, was fully reconciled to the delicacy and strict decorum of Menander's wit. Even the case of Terence, which, at first sight, might seem to bear hard against it, confirms this account. This poet, struck with the supreme elegance of Menander's manner, and attempting too soon, before the public taste was sufficiently formed for it, to bring it on the stage, had occasion for all the credit, his noble patrons could give him, to support himself against the popular clamour. What was the object of that *clamour*, we learn from a curious passage in one of his prologues, where his adversary is made to object,

*Quas—fecit—fabulas*
*Tenui esse oratione et scriptura levi.*
Prol. ad Phorm.

The sense of which is not, as his commentators have idly thought, *that his style was low and trifling*, for this could never be pretended; but *that his dialogue was insipid, and his characters, and, in general, his whole composition, without that comic heightening, which their vitiated tastes required.* This further appears from those common verses of Cæsar, where, characterizing the genius of Terence's plays, as devoid of this comic spirit, he calls them *lenia scripta :*

LENIBUS *atque utinam* SCRIPTIS *adjuncta foret vis*
COMICA :

words, which are the clearest comment on the lines in question.

But this famous judgment of Cæsar deserves to be scrutinized more narrowly. For it may be said "that by *vis comica* I suppose him to mean the comic drollery of the *old* and *middle* comedy; whereas it is more probable he meant the elegant but high humour of the best writers of the *new*, particularly of Menander; why else doth he call Terence, "*Dimidiate Menander*?" There is the more force in this objection, because *the elegant but high humour*, here mentioned, is of the truest merit in comedy; and because Menander, of whom the ancients speak so honourably, and whom we only know by their encomiums, may be reasonably thought to have excelled in it. What occurs in answer to it, is this.

1. The Ancients are generally allowed to have had very little of what we now understand by *comic humour*. Lucian is the *first*, indeed the only one, who hath properly left us any considerable specimens of it. And he is almost modern with regard to the writers under consideration. But,

2. That *Menander and the writers of the new comedy did not excel in it*, is probable for these reasons.

1. The most judicious critic of antiquity, when he is purposely considering the excellencies of the Greek comedians, and, what is more, exposing the comparative deficiencies of the Roman, says not a word of it. He thinks, indeed, that *Terence's*, which yet he pronounces to be most

elegant, is but the faintest shadow of the Greek, comedy. But then his reason is, *quod sermo ipse Romanus non recipere videatur illam solis concessam Atticis venerem.* [L. x. 1.] It seems then as if the main defect, which this critic observed in Terence's comedy, was a want of that inexplicable grace of language, which so peculiarly belonged to the Greeks; a grace of so subtle a nature that even they could only catch it in one dialect—*quando eam ne Græci quidem in alio genere linguæ non obtinuerint.* [Ib.]"

2. Some of Terence's plays may be almost said to be direct translations from Menander. And the comic humour, supposed in the objection, being of the truest taste, no reason can be imagined why the poet should so industriously avoid to transfuse this last and highest grace into his comedy. Especially since the popular cry against him proceeded from hence, that he was wanting in comic pleasantry; a *want*, which by a stricter attention to this virtue of his great original, supposing Menander to have been possessed of it, he might so easily have supplied. And lest it should be thought he omitted to do this, as not conceiving any thing of this *virtue*, or as not approving it, we find in him, but rarely indeed, some delicate touches, which approach as nearly as any thing in antiquity to this genuine comic humour. Of which kind is that in the *Hecyra*:

*Tum tu igitur nihil adtulisti huc plus unâ sententiâ?*

For these reasons I should suppose that *Menander* and the writers of the new comedy, from whom Terence copied, had little of this beauty.

But what shall we say then to Cæsar's *dimidiate Menander?* It refers, I believe, solely to what Quintilian, as we have seen, observed, that, with all his emulation of Attic elegance, he was unable, through the native stubbornness of the Latin tongue, to come up to the Greek comedy. The very text of Cæsar leads to this meaning.

*Tu quoque, tu in summis, ô dimidiate Menander,*
*Poneris, et merito,* PURI SERMONIS AMATOR.

His excellence consisted in the *purity and urbanity of his expression,* in which praise if he still fell short of his master, the fault was not in him, but the intractability of his language. And in this view Cæsar's address carries with it the highest *compliment.* Quintilian had said in relation to this point, *Vix levem consequimur umbram.* But Cæsar, in a fond admiration of his merit, cries out,

*Tu quoque,* TU *in summis,* ô DIMIDIATE MENANDER.

His *censure* of him is delivered in the following lines:

*Lenibus atque utinam scriptis adjuncta foret vis*
*Comica, ut æquato virtus polleret honore*
*Cum Græcis, neque in hâc despectus parte jaceres;*
*Unum hoc maceror et doleo tibi deesse, Terenti.*

Which, again, gives no countenance to the supposition of Menander's excelling in *comic humour*. For he does not say, that with the addition of this talent he had equalled *Menander*, but in general, the GREEKS—*æquato virtus polleret honore cum* GRÆCIS. And this was what occasioned Cæsar's regret. He wished to see him unite all the merits of the Greek comedy. As far as the Latin tongue would permit, he had shewn himself a master of the elegance of the *new*. What he further required in him was the strong wit and satyr of the *old*. His favourite had then rivalled, in every praise, the Greek writers.

And, if this be admitted, nothing hinders but that by *vis comica* Cæsar may be understood to mean (how consistently with the admired urbanity of Terence is not the question) the comic pleasantry of the middle or old comedy.

The thing indeed could hardly be otherwise. For Plautus, who chiefly copied from the *middle* comedy, had, by the drollery of his wit, and the buffoon pleasantry of his scenes, so enchanted the people as to continue the reigning favourite of the stage, even long after Afranius and Terence had appeared on it. Nay the humour continued through the Augustan age[o], when, as we learn from Horace, in many parts of his writings, the public applause still followed Plautus; in whom though himself

[o] And no wonder, when, as Suetonius tells us, the emperor himself was so delighted with the old comedy. [c. 89.]

could see many faults, yet he does not appear to have gone so far, as, upon the whole, to give the preference to Terence. Afterwards indeed the case altered. Paterculus admires; and Plutarch and Quintilian are perfectly charmed: *ita omnem vitæ imaginem expressit, ita est omnibus rebus, personis, affectibus accommodatus.* This character, one would think, should have fitted him also for a complete model to the orator. And this, as might be expected, was Quintilian's opinion. For, though he saw, as appears from the passage already quoted, that the writers of the old comedy were, in fact, *the likest to orators, and the most proper to form them to the practice of the Forum,* yet, in admiration of the absolute perfection of Menander's manner, and criticising him by the rules of a just and accurate rhetoric, and not at all in the views of a practical orator, he pronounces him to be a complete pattern of oratorial excellence: *vel unus, diligenter lectus, ad cuncta efficienda sufficiat,* l. x. c. 1. Yet Cicero, it seems, thought otherwise; for he scarcely, as I remember, mentions the name of Menander in his rhetorical books, though he is very large in commending the authors of the old Greek comedy. The reason was unquestionably that we have been explaining: The delicate observance of decorum, for which this poet was so famous, *in omnibus mire custoditur ab hoc poeta decorum,* rendered him an unfit model for a popular speaker, especially in Rome, where an orator was much more likely to

carry his point by the *vis comica*, the *broader mirth* of Aristophanes, or Plautus, than by the delicate railleries, and exquisite paintings of Menander, or Terence.

273. SI MODO EGO ET VOS SCIMUS INURBANUM LEPIDO SEPONERE DICTO.] It was very late ere the ancients became acquainted with this distinction. Indeed it does not appear, they ever possessed it in that supreme degree, which might have been expected from their exquisite discernment in other instances. Even Horace himself, though his pictures of life are commonly the most delicate, and wrought up in the highest beauty of humour, yet, when he affects the *plaisant*, and purposely aims at the comic style and manner, is observed to sink beneath himself extremely. The truth is, there is something low, and what the French call *grossier*, in the whole cast of ancient wit; which is rather a kind of rude, illiberal satire, than a just and temperate ridicule, restrained by the exact rules of civility and good sense. This a celebrated writer, who seems willing to think the most favourably of the ancient wits, in effect owns, when, after quoting certain instances of their raillery, he says, *Ces exemples, quoique vifs et bons en leur genre, ont quelque chose de trop dur, qui ne s'accommoderoit pas à nôtre maniere de vivre; et ce seroit ce que nous appellons rompre en visiers, que de dire en face des veritez aussi forts que celles-là.* [Rec. de bons

Contes et de bons Mots, p. 89.] This rudeness, complained of, appears in nothing more evident, than in their perpetual banter on corporal infirmities, which runs through all the wits both of Greece and Rome. And to shew us, that this was not a practice, they allowed themselves in against rule, Cicero mentions corporal infirmities [De Or. l. ii. c. 59.] as one of the most legitimate sources of the RIDICULOUS. *Est deformitatis et corporis vitiorum satis bella materies.* And in another place, *Valde ridentur etiam imagines, quæ fere in deformitatem, aut in aliquod vitium corporis ducuntur cum similitudine turpioris,* &c. [ib. c. 66.] And this, which is very remarkable, though they saw the absurdity of it, as appears from the answer of Lamia, recorded by Cicero, to a joke of this kind, *Non potui mihi formam ipse fingere,* [ib. c. 65.] The universal prevalence of a practice so absurd in itself, and seen by themselves to be so, in the two politest states of the old world, must needs have sprung from some very *general,* and *powerful* cause; which, because it hath not, that I know of, been considered by any writer, I shall here attempt to open and explane. The subject is curious, and would require a volume to do it justice. I can only hint at the principal reasons, which appear to me to have been these.

I. *The free and popular government of those states.* This, preserving an equality of condition, and thereby spreading a fearlessness and independency through all ranks and orders of men, of course pro-

duced and indulged the utmost freedom of expression, uninfluenced by hopes of favour, and unawed by fear of personal offence; the two sources, from whence the civility of a more cautious ridicule is derived. Now of all the species of raillery, the most natural and *obvious* to a people unrestrained by these causes, is ever the *coarsest*, such as that on corporal deformities; as appears from its prevailing every where, in all forms of government, among the lowest of the people, betwixt whom those causes never subsist. But this reason involves in it some particulars, which deserve to be considered. 1. The *orators*, who catched it from the constitution themselves, contributed in their turn to forward and help on this disposition to uncivilized mirth. For, the form of their government requiring immediate, and almost continual, applications to the people; and the nature of such applications giving frequent exercise to their wit, it was natural for them to suit it to the capacities of their auditory; if indeed they had seen better themselves. Thus we find the orators in the Forum, even in the later times of the Roman republic, exposing their adversary to the broad mirth of the populace, by enlarging on his *low stature*, *ugly face*, or *distorted chin*. Instances of which may be met with in Cicero's treatise De oratore; and even, as hath been observed, in some orations and other pieces of Cicero himself. 2. From the *Forum* the humour insensibly spread amongst all orders, and particularly, amongst the writers for the stage, where it was

kept up in its full vigour, or rather heightened to a further extravagance, the laughter of the people being its more immediate and direct aim. But, the stage not only conformed, as of course it would, to the spirit of the times (which, for the reason already given, were none of the most observant of decorum) but, as we shall also find, it had perhaps the greatest influence in *producing and forming that spirit itself.* This will appear, if we recollect, in few words, *the rise, progress, and character of the ancient stage.*

The Greek drama, we know, had its origin from the loose, licentious raillery of the rout of Bacchus, indulging to themselves the freest sallies of taunt and invective, as would best suit to lawless natures, inspirited by festal mirth, and made extravagant by wine. Hence arose, and with a character answering to this original, the *satyric drama;* the spirit of which was afterwards, in good measure, revived and continued in the old comedy, and itself preserved, though with considerable alteration in the form, through all the several periods of the Greek stage; even when tragedy, which arose out of it, was brought to its last perfection. Much the same may be observed of the *Roman* drama, which, we are told, had its rise in the unrestrained festivity of the rustic youth. This gave occasion to their *Satyræ*, that is, medleys of an irregular form, acted for the diversion of the people. And, when afterwards Livius Andronicus had, by a further reform, reduced these *Satyræ*

into regular tragedies, another species of buffoon ridicule was cultivated, under the name of *Atellanæ fabulæ*; which, according to Diomedes' character of them, *were replete with jocular witticisms, and very much resembled the Greek satyrs. Dictis jocularibus refertæ, similes fere sunt satyricis fabulis Græcorum.* These were ever after retained, and annexed to their most regular dramatic entertainments in Rome, just as the *satyrs* were in Greece; and this (as was seen in its place) though much pains was taken to reform, if not wholly remove, them. But to shew how strong the passion of the Romans was for this rude illiberal banter, even the licentious character of the *Atellanes* did not fully satisfy them; but, as if they were determined to stick to their genuine rusticity, they continued the *Satyræ* themselves, under the name of *Exodia*, that is farces of the grossest and most absurd composition; which, to heighten the mirth of the day, were commonly interwoven with the Atellane pieces. The reason of the continuance of such ribaldry in the politest ages of Greece and Rome hath been inquired into. At present it appears, what effect it must necessarily have upon the public taste.

II. Another cause connected with the foregoing, and rising out of it, seems to have been the festal licence of particular seasons, such as the *Dionysia* and *Panathenæa*, amongst the Greeks; and the *Bacchanalia* and *Saturnalia*, at Rome. These latter, it is observable, were continued to the latest

period of the Roman empire, preserving in them an image, as well of the frank and libertine wit of their old stage, as of the original equality and independency of their old times. Quintilian thinks, that, with some regulation, good use might have been made of these seasons of licence, for the cultivating a just spirit of raillery in the orators of his time. As it was, there is no doubt, they helped much to vitiate and deprave it. His words are these: *Quin illæ ipsæ, quæ* DICTA *sunt ac vocantur, quas certis diebus festæ licentiæ dicere solebamus, si paulum adhibita ratione fingerentur, aut aliquid in his serium quoque esset admixtum, plurimum poterunt utilitatis afferre: quæ nunc juvenum, aut sibi ludentium exercitatio est.* [Quint. l. iv. c. 3.] Besides, in Greeee, the jester was a character by profession, necessary to the pleasantry of private feasts, and, as we learn from the fine satyr in Xenophon's *Symposium*, even in that polite age, welcome to all companies [p].

[p] This is further confirmed from Lucian, who, in the description of a splendid feast in his ΑΛΕΚΤΡΥΩΝ, and in the *Symposium of his* ΛΑΠΙΘΑΙ, brings in the ΓΕΛΩΤΟΠΟΙΟΙ as necessary attendants on the entertainment.—But the reader will not take what is said of the *fine satyr* of Xenophon's Symposium, who hath not observed, that this sort of compositions, which were in great credit with the ancients, are of the nature of dramas, ΗΘΙΚΟΙ ΛΟΓΟΙ, as Aristotle would call them. In which the dialogists, who are real personages as in the *old comedy*, give a lively, and sometimes exaggerated expression of their own characters. Under this *idea* of a Symposium we are prepared to expect *bad* characters

From these reasons I think it not difficult to account for the coarseness of ancient wit. The free genius of the Greek and Roman constitution was unquestionably its main spring and support. But, when this character of their government was seconded by the freedom of their demagogues, the petulance of the stage, and the uncontrouled licence of recurring festival solemnities, it was no wonder, the illiberal manner so thoroughly infected all ranks and degrees of the people, as by no after diligence and refinement wholly to be removed. And this theory is indeed confirmed by *fact*. For, when now the

as well as *good*. Nothing in the *kind* of composition itself confined the writer to the *latter*; and the decorum of a *festal conversation*, which, in a republic especially, would have a mixture of satyr in it, seemed to demand the *former*. We see then the undoubted purpose of Xenophon in the persons of his JESTER and SYRACUSIAN; and of Plato, in those of ARISTOPHANES and some others. Where we may further take notice, that, to prevent the abuse and misconstruction, to which these personated discourses are ever liable, Socrates is brought in to correct the looseness of them, in both dialogues, and in some measure doth the office of the dramatic chorus, BONIS FAVENDI. But it is the less strange that the moderns have not apprehended the genius of these *Symposia*, when Athenæus, who professedly criticises them, and one would think, had a better opportunity of knowing their real character, hath betrayed the grossest ignorance about them.—I can but just hint these things, which might afford curious matter for a dissertation. But enough is said to let the intelligent reader into the true secret of these *convivial dialogues*, and to explane the ground of the encomium here passed upon *one* of them.

tyranny of one man had ingrossed the power, and oppressed the liberties, of Greece, their stage refined, their wit polished, and Menander wrote. And though a thorough reform was never made in the Roman stage, partly, as Quintilian thinks, from the intractability of their language, but chiefly, it may be, as to the point in question, from the long continuance of their rude farcical shews, yet something like this appears to have followed upon the loss of their freedom; as is plain from the improved delicacy of their later critics; who, as Quintilian and Plutarch, are very profuse in their encomiums on Menander, and the *new* comedy; whereas we find little said of it by the Augustan writers, who seem generally to have preferred the coarser wit and pleasantry of the *old*. The state of modern wit too confirms this account. For it has grown up, for the most part, under limited monarchies, in which their scenical entertainments were more moderate, or for plain reasons must less affect the public taste. Whenever therefore a turn for letters has prevailed, a poignant, but liberal kind of wit hath generally sprung up with it. Where it is worth observing, the growing tyranny in some states hath either extinguished it intirely, or refined it into an effeminate and timid delicacy, as the growing licentiousness in others hath sunk it into a rude and brutal coarseness; whilst b a due mixture of liberty and letters, we have seen it acquire a proper temperament at home, and, as managed by our best writers, exhibit a specimen

of that strong, yet elegant ridicule, which hath never yet been equalled by any other nation in the world.

275. IGNOTUM TRAGICAE GENUS INVENISSE CAMENAE, &c.] The poet, having just remarked the negligence of the Roman writers, in two or three instances, and, at the same time recommended to them the superior care and accuracy of the Greeks (all which is elegantly preparatory to the last division of the epistle) proceeds in a short view of the Greek drama, to insinuate, as well the successful pains of the Greek writers, as the real state of the Roman stage; the complete glory of which could only be expected, as immediately follows, from a spirit of diligence and correctness. As this whole connexion is clear and easy, so is the peculiar method, in which it is conducted, extremely proper. 1. To shew, how great the advantage of their situation was over that of the Greeks, he observes, that the latter had the whole constitution of the drama to invent and regulate; which yet, by the application and growing experience of their poets, was soon effected; their tragedy, all rude and shapeless, as it was, in the cart of Thespis, appearing in its just form and proportion on the stage of Æschylus; and their comedy also (which, from that time, began to be cultivated) asserting its proper character, and, but for the culpable omission of a chorus, reaching the full extent and perfection of its kind.

2. To shew, what still remained to them, he brings down the history of tragedy no lower than Æschylus; under whom it received its due form and all the essentials of its nature, yet still wanted, to its absolute perfection, the further accuracy and correctness of a Sophocles. And, for their comedy, he hints the principal defect of that; its omission, after the manner of the new comedy, of the chorus. There is great address in this conduct. The censure also implied in it, is perfectly just. For, 1. the character of the Roman tragedy, in the times of Horace, was exactly that of Æschylus. Æschylus, says Quintilian, was the first, "*qui protulit tragœdias*," i. e. who composed true legitimate tragedies, *sublimis et gravis et grandiloquus sæpe usque ad vitium; sed rudis in plerisque et incompositus* [L. x. c. i.] the very description, which Horace gives [2 Ep. i. 165.] of the Roman tragedy.

*natura sublimis et acer,*
*Nam spirat tragicum satis et feliciter audet;*
*Sed turpem putat inscitus metuitque lituram.*

2. The state of their comedy, as managed by their best writers, Afranius and Terence, was, indeed, much more complete; yet wanted the chorus, which, in the judgment of the poet, it seems, was equally necessary to the perfection of this, as of the other drama.

3. But the application is made in express terms.

*Nil intentatum nostri liquere poetæ*, &c.

*i. e.* our poets, as well as the Greek, have, in some degree, applied themselves to improve and regulate the stage. In particular, a late innovation, in taking their subjects, both of tragedy and comedy, from domestic facts, is highly to be applauded. Their sole disadvantage is, *a neglect or contempt of that labour and accuracy, which gave the last perfection to the Greek scene.*

After this clear and natural exposition of the connexion of these lines, all the difficulties, that have been found in them by certain great critics, vanish of themselves. And the reader now sees (what the sagacious Heinsius thought impossible to be shewn) an ἀκολουθίαν, or consistent, natural order in this part of the epistle; which was in imminent danger of losing all its grace and beauty, by the wild transpositions of that critic.

278. POST HUNC PERSONAE PALLAEQUE, &c.] M. *Dacier* hath here puzzled himself with a difficulty of his own raising. He wonders, that Horace should omit, in this history, the other improvements of Æschylus, mentioned by Aristotle, and that Aristotle, in his turn, should omit those, mentioned by Horace. The truth is, neither of them intended a complete account of the improvements of the Greek stage; but only so much of them, as was necessary to the views of each. Aristotle, treating of the *internal* constitution of the drama, speaks of such changes, made in it by Æschylus, as respected that end. Horace, treat-

ng in general of its *form*, as perfected by the pains and application of the same poet, selects those improvements only, which contrast best to the rude essays of Thespis, and, while they imply the rest, exhibit tragedy, as it were, in her proper person, on the stage. The reader feels the effect of this in the poetry.

288. VEL QUI PRAETEXTAS, VEL QUI DOCUERE TOGATAS.] There hath been much difficulty here in settling a very plain point. The question is, whether *prætextas* means *tragedy*, or a species of *comedy*? The answer is very clear from Diomedes, whose account is, in short, this. "[1] *Togatæ* is a "general term for all sorts of Latin plays, adopting "the Roman customs and dresses; as *Palliatæ* is, "for all, adopting the Græcian. Of the *Togatæ*, the "several [2] species are, 1. *Prætexta*, or *Prætextata*, "in which Roman kings and generals were introduced, and is so called, because the *prætexta* was "the distinguishing habit of such persons. 2. *Tabernaria*, frequently called [3] *Togata*, though that "word, as we have seen, had properly a larger "sense. 3. *Atellana*. 4. *Planipedis*." He next marks the difference of these several sorts of *Togatæ*, from the similar, corresponding ones of the *Palliatæ*, which are these: "1. [4] Tragœdia, absolutely so styled. 2. [5] Comœdia. 3. [6] Satyri. "4. [7] Μῖμος." [These four sorts of the *palliatæ* were also probably in use at Rome; certainly, at least, the two former.] It appears then from hence,

that *prætextata* was properly the Roman tragedy. But he adds, "*Togata prætextata à tragœdia* "*differt*, and it is also said, *to be only like tra-* "*gedy, tragœdiæ similis.*" What is this difference and this likeness? The explanation follows. "[8] He- "roes are introduced in *tragedy*, such as Orestes, "Chryses, and the like. In the *prætextata*, Bru- "tus, Decius, or Marcellus." So then we see, when Græcian characters were introduced, it was called simply *tragœdia;* when Roman, *prætextata;* yet both, tragedies. The sole difference lay in the persons being foreign or domestic. The correspondence in every other respect was exact. The same is observed of the Roman comedy; when it adopted [9] Greek characters, it was called *comœdia:* when Roman, [20] *Togata Tabernaria*, or [3] *Togata*, simply. That the reader may assure himself of the fidelity of this account, let him take it at large, in the Grammarian's own words. "[1] Togatæ fabulæ "dicuntur, quæ scriptæ sunt secundum ritus et "habitus hominum togatorum, id est, Romanorum "(Toga namque Romana est), sicut Græcas fabulas "ab habitu æque palliatas Varro ait nominari. "[3] Togatas autem cum sit generale nomen, speci- "aliter tamen pro tabernariis, non modo communis "error usurpat, sed et poetæ.—Togatarum fabula- "rum [2] species tot fere sunt, quot et palliatarum. "Nam prima species est togatarum, quæ prætex- "tatæ dicuntur, in quibus imperatorum negotia "agebantur et publica, et reges Romani vel duces

"inducuntur, personarum et argumentorum subli-
"mitate[4] tragœdiis similes: Prætextatæ autem
"dicuntur, quia fere regum vel magistratuum,
"qui prætexta utuntur, in hujusmodi fabulis acta
"comprehenduntur. Secunda species togatarum,
"quæ tabernariæ dicuntur, humilitate personarum
"et argumentorum similitudine [5]comœdiis pares —
"Tertia species est fabularum latinarum, quæ —
"Atellanæ dictæ sunt, similes [6]satyricis fabulis,
"Græcis. Quarta species est planipedis, Græce
"dicitur [7]Μῖμος.—Togata prætextata, à [4]tragœdia
"differt. In tragœdia [8]heroes introducuntur. Pa-
"cuvius tragœdias nominibus heroicis scripsit Ores-
"ten, Cresten, Chrysen, et his similia. Item Ac-
"cius. In prætextata autem scribitur, Brutus, vel
"Decius, vel Marcellus. [19]Togata tabernaria à
"[5]comœdia differt, quod in [9]comœdia Græci ritus
"inducuntur, personæque Græcæ, Laches, Sostrata.
"In illa vero Latinæ." [L. iii. c. de Com. et Trag. diff.] With this account of Diomedes agrees perfectly that of *Festus;* from which, however, M. Dacier draws a very different conclusion. "Toga-
"tarum duplex est genus: prætextarum — et taber-
"nariarum." His inference is, that prætextatæ, as being a species of the togatæ, must needs be comedies; not considering that togata is here a generic term, comprehending under it all the several species both of the Roman tragedy and comedy. After what hath been said, and especially, after the full and decisive testimony of Diomedes, there can no longer be any doubt about the meaning of *præ-*

*textas*; and one must be surprized to find M. Dacier prefacing his long note on this place in the following important manner: *C'est un des plus difficiles passages d'Horace, et peutêtre celui qu'il est le plus mal aisé d'eclaircir à cause du peu de lumiere que nous donnent les auteurs Latins sur tout ce qui regarde leurs pieces de theatre.*

281. SUCCESSIT VETUS HIS COMOEDIA, &c.] *i. e.* Comedy began to be cultivated and improved from the time that tragedy had obtained its end, ἔσχε τὴν ἑαυτῆς φύσιν, under Æschylus. There is no reason to suppose, with some critics, that Horace meant to date its origin from hence. The supposition is, in truth, contradicted by *experience* and the *order of things.* For, as a celebrated French writer observes, "*Le talent d'imiter, qui nous est naturel, nous porte plutôt à la comedie qui roule sur des choses de nôtre connoissance qu'à la Tragedie, qui prend des sujets plus èloignés de l'usage commun; et en effet, en Gréce aussi bien qu'en France, la Comedie est l'aînée de la tragedie.*" [Hist. du Theat. Franc. par M. de Fontenelle.] The *latter* part of this assertion is clear from the piece referred to; and the *other*, which respects Greece, seems countenanced by Aristotle himself [περ. ποιητ. κ. ε.] 'Tis true, Comedy, though its rise be every where, at least, as early as that of tragedy, is perfected much later. Menander, we know, appeared long after Æschylus. And, though the French tragedy, to speak with Aristotle, ἔσχε

τὴν ἑαυτῆς φύσιν in the hands of Corneille, this cannot be said of their comedy, which was forced to wait for a Moliere, before it arrived at that pitch of perfection. But then this is owing to the superior difficulty of the comic drama. Nor is it any objection that the contrary of this happened at Rome. For the Romans, when they applied themselves in earnest to the stage, had not to invent, but to imitate or rather *translate*, the perfect models of Greece. And it chanced, for reasons which I shall not stay to deduce, that their poets had better success in copying their *comedy*, than *tragedy*.

284. TURPITER OBTICUIT—] Evidently because, though the *jus nocendi* was taken away, yet that was no good reason, why the chorus should entirely cease. M. Dacier mistakes the matter. *Le chœur se tût ignominieusement, parceque la loi reprima sa licence, et que ce fut, à proprement parler, la loi qui le bannit; ce qu' Horace regarde comme une espece de flétrissure. Properly speaking*, the law only abolished the *abuse* of the chorus. The ignominy lay in dropping the entire use of it, on account of this restraint. Horace was of opinion, that the chorus ought to have been retained, though the state had abridged it of the licence, it so much delighted in, of an illimited, and intemperate satyr. *Sublatus chorus fuit*, says Scaliger, *cujus illæ videntur esse præcipuæ partes, ut potissimum quos liberet, læderent.*

286. NEC MINIMUM MERUERE DECUS VESTIGIA GRÆCA AUSI DESERERE ET CELEBRARE DOMESTICA FACTA.] This judgment of the poet, recommending domestic subjects, as fittest for the stage, may be inforced from many obvious reasons. As 1. that it renders the drama infinitely more *affecting*: and this on many accounts. 1. As a subject, taken from our own annals, must of course carry with it an air of greater probability, at least to the generality of the people, than one borrowed from those of any other nation. 2. As we all find a personal interest in the subject. 3. As it of course affords the best and easiest opportunities of catching our minds, by frequent references to our manners, prejudices, and customs. And of how great importance this is, may be learned from hence, that, even in the exhibition of foreign characters, dramatic writers have found themselves obliged to sacrifice truth and probability to the humour of the people, and to dress up their personages, contrary to their own better judgment, in some degree according to the mode and manners of their respective countries[q]. And

q "L'étude égale des poëtes de différens tems à plaire à leurs "spectateurs, a encore influé dans la maniere de peindre les cha- "racters. Ceux qui paroissent sur la scene Angloise, Espagnole, "Françoise, sont plus Anglois, Espagnols, ou François que "Grecs ou Romains, en un mot que ce qu'ils doivent être. Il "ne faut qu'en peu discernement pour s'appercevoir que nos "Césars et nos Achilles, en gardant même une partie de leur "caractere primitif, prennent droit de naturalité dans le païs

4. as the writer himself, from an intimate acquaintance with the character and genius of his own nation, will be more likely to draw the manners with life and spirit.

II. Next, which should ever be one great point in view, it renders the drama more generally useful in its moral destination. For, it being conversant about domestic acts, the great instruction of the fable more sensibly affects us; and the characters exhibited, from the part we take in their good or ill qualities, will more probably influence our conduct.

III. Lastly, this judgment will deserve the greater regard, as the conduct recommended was, in fact, the practice of our great models, the Greek writers; in whose plays, it is observable, there is scarcely a single scene, which lies out of the confines of Greece.

But, notwithstanding these reasons, the practice hath, in all times, been but little followed. The Romans, after some few attempts in this way (from whence the poet took the occasion of delivering it as a dramatic precept), soon relapsed into their old use; as appears from Seneca's, and the titles of other plays, written in, or after the Augustan age. Succeeding times continued the same attachment to

"où ils sont transplantez, semblables à ces portraits, qui sortent "de la main d'un peintre Flamand, Italien, ou François, et "qui portent l'empreinte du païs. On veut plaire à sa nation, "et rien ne plait tant que la resemblance de manieres et de "genie." [P. Brumoy, vol. i. p. 200.]

Grecian, with the addition of an equal fondness for Roman, subjects. The reason in both instances hath been ever the same: that strong and early prejudice, approaching somewhat to adoration, in favour of the illustrious names of those two great states. The account of this matter is very easy; for their writings, as they furnish the business of our younger, and the amusement of our riper, years, and more especially make the study of all those, who devote themselves to poetry and the stage, insensibly infix in us an excessive veneration for all affairs in which they were concerned; insomuch that no other subjects or events seem considerable enough, or rise, in any proportion, to our ideas of the dignity of the tragic scene, but such as time and long admiration have consecrated in the annals of their story. Our Shakespeare was, I think, the first that broke through this bondage of classical superstition. And he owed this felicity, as he did some others, to his want of what is called the advantage of a learned education. Thus uninfluenced by the weight of early prepossession, he struck at once into the road of nature and common sense: and without designing, without knowing it, hath left us in his historical plays, with all their anomalies, an exacter resemblance of the Athenian stage, than is any where to be found in its most professed admirers and copyists.

I will only add, that, for the more successful execution of this rule of celebrating domestic acts,

much will depend on the æra, from whence the subject is taken. Times too remote have almost the same inconveniences, and none of the advantages, which attend the ages of Greece and Rome. And, for those of later date, they are too much familiarized to us, and have not as yet acquired that venerable cast and air, which tragedy demands, and age only can give. There is no fixing this point with precision. In the general, that æra is the fittest for the poet's purpose, which, though fresh enough in our minds to warm and interest us in the event of the action, is yet at so great a distance from the present times, as to have lost all those mean and disparaging circumstances, which unavoidably adhere to recent deeds, and, in some measure, sink the noblest modern transactions to the level of ordinary life.

295. INGENIUM MISERA, &c.] *Sæpe audivi poetam bonum neminem (id quod à Democrito et Platone in scriptis relictum esse dicunt) sine inflammatione animorum existere posse et sine quodam afflatu quasi furoris.* [Cic. De orat. l. ii. c. xlvi.] And so Petronius, *præcipitandus liber spiritus, ut furentis animi vaticinatio appareat.* [c. cxviii.]. And to the same purpose every good critic, ancient or modern. But who can endure the grimace of those minute *genii*, who, because the truly inspired, in the ravings of the fit, are *touched* with the flame and fury of enthusiasm, must, therefore,

with a tame, frigid fancy, be laying claim to the same fervent and fiery raptures? The fate of these *aspirants* to divinity is that ἐνθουσιᾷν ἑαυτοῖς δοκοῦντες, οὐ βακχεύουσιν, ἀλλὰ παίζουσιν [Longin. περ. ὕψ. τμημ. χ.] And Quintilian opens the mystery of the whole matter: *Quo quisque ingenio minus valet, hoc se magis attollere et dilatare conatur: ut statura breves in digitos eriguntur et plura infirmi minantur. Nam tumidos et corruptos et tinnulos et quocunque alio cacozeliæ genere peccantes, certum habeo, non virium, sed infirmitatis vitio laborare: ut corpora non robore, sed valetudine inflantur: et recto itinere lapsi plerumque divertunt.* [L. ii. c. 3.]

298. Bona pars non ungues, &c.] The constant and pitiful affectation of the race before spoken of, who, with the modesty of laying claim to the *thing*, will be sure not to omit the *sign*, and so, from fancying an inspiration, they have *not* come to adopt every foppery, that has ever disgraced it in those who *have*.

308. Quid deceat, quid non:] *Nihil est difficilius quam,* quid deceat, *videre.* Πρέπον *appellant hoc Græci: nos dicamus sane* Decorum. *De quo præclare et multa præcipiuntur, et res est cognitione dignissima. Hujus ignoratione non modo in vitâ, sed sæpissime in* Poematis *et in oratione peccatur.* [Orator. xxi.]

309. SCRIBENDI RECTE, SAPERE EST ET PRINCIPIUM ET FONS.] The Orator was of the same mind, when he sent his pupil to the academy for instruction. *Quis nescit maximam vim existere oratoris in hominum mentibus vel ad iram, aut dolorem incitandis, vel ab hisce iisdem permotionibus ad lenitatem misericordiamque revocandis? quæ, nisi qui naturas hominum, vimque omnem humanitatis, causasque eas quibus mentes aut incitantur aut reflectuntur, penitus perspexerit, dicendo, quod volet, perficere non poterit. Atqui* TOTUS HIC LOCUS PHILOSOPHORUM PROPRIUS VIDETUR. [De Orat. l. i. c. xii.] And he spoke, we know, from his own experience, *having acquired his oratorial skill not in the schools of the rhetoricians, but the walks of the academy: fateor me oratorem, si modo sim, aut etiam quicunque sim, non ex rhetorum officinis, sed ex Academiæ spatiis extitisse.* [Orat. p. 622. Elz. ed.] But the reason he gives for this advice, though common to the poet; whose character, as well as the orator's, it is, *posse voluntates impellere, quo velis, unde velis, deducere,* is yet, not the only one, which respects the poet. For his business is to *paint,* and that not only, as the orator does, in order to move, but for the sole end of *pleasing: solam petit voluptatem.* [Quinct. l. x. c. i.] The boast of his art is to catch every different aspect of nature, and more especially to exhibit the human character in every varying light and form, under which it presents itself. But this is not to be done without

an exquisite study, and philosophical knowledge of man; to which end, as is remarked in *n.* on v. 317. the Socratic philosophy is more peculiarly adapted. Add to this, that it is the genius of true poetry, not only to animate, but to *personalize* every thing, *omnia debent esse morata.* Hence the indispensable necessity of moral science: all poetry being, in effect, what Mr. Dryden somewhere calls comedy, THE THEFT OF POETS FROM MANKIND.

310. SOCRATICAE CHARTAE.] An admired writer, in many respects deservedly so, thus comments on these words: "The philosophical writings, to "which our poet refers, were in themselves a kind of "poetry, like the *mimes*, or personated pieces of early "times, before philosophy was in vogue, and when "as yet *Dramatical imitation* was scarce formed: or "at least, in many parts, not brought to due perfec-"tion. They were pieces, which, besides their force "of style, and hidden numbers, carried a sort of "*action* and *imitation*, the same as the *Epic* and "*Dramatic* kinds. They were either real dialogues, "or recitals of such personated discourses; where the "persons themselves had their characters preserved "throughout; their manners, humours, and distinct "turns of temper and understanding maintained, ac-"cording to the most exact poetical truth. 'Twas not "enough, that these pieces treated fundamentally of "morals, and, in consequence, pointed out real cha-"racters and manners: They exhibited them alive,

and set the countenances and complexions of men "plainly in view. And by this means they not only "taught us to know others; but, what was principal "and of highest virtue in them, they taught us to "know ourselves." Thus far then these models are of unquestioned use to writers of every denomination. I forbear to mention, what this noble author finds occasion frequently to insinuate, and, by his own practice, labours to recommend, the superior excellency of the *manner*, as well as *matter*, of these highly-rated originals. Not that I presume to think it unworthy of imitation. But the public taste, as appears, is running full fast that way, insomuch that some may even doubt, if the state of literary composition be more endangered by the neglect, or vicious imitation, of the Platonic manner. Its graces, when sparingly employed by a real genius, for the embellishment of strong sense, have, it must be owned, great beauty. But when this humour of *platonizing* seizes on some minuter spirit, bent on ennobling a trivial matter, and all over-run with academic delicacy and affectation, nothing, to a just and manly relish, can be more disgusting. One must wink hard not to see frequent examples of this, in the master Platonist himself. But his mimics, of late, have gone much farther. There is no need, in such a croud of instances, to point to particulars. What I would rather observe is, that this folly, offensive as it is, may perhaps admit of some excuse from the *present state of our literature*, and *the character of the great*

*original himself*, whom these writers aspire to imitate. When a language, as ours at this time, hath been much polished and enriched with perfect models of style in almost every way, it is in the order of things, that the next step should be to a *vicious affectation*. For the simplicity of true taste, under these circumstances, grows insipid. Something *better than the best* must be aimed at; and the reader's languid appetite raised by the provocatives of an ambitious refinement. And this in *sentiment*, as well as *language*. Whence we see how it happened, that even in *Greece* itself, where composition was studied with a more than common accuracy, *Philosophy*, when it passed out of the hands of its great masters, degenerated by degrees into the subtilties of sophistry, as did *Eloquence*, likewise, into the tricks of rhetoric.

But there was something, as I hinted, too, in the *character of the writer imitated*, of a very ticklish and dangerous nature; and of which our tribe of imitators were not sufficiently aware. A very exact critic of antiquity hath told us what it was. It lay in Plato's *bringing the tumor of poetic composition into discourses of philosophy*, ΟΤΙ ΤΟΝ ΟΓΚΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΤΑΣΚΕΥΗΣ ΕΠΙ ΛΟΓΟΥΣ ΗΓΑΓΕ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΥΣ[t]. And though the experiment, for the most part, succeeded not amiss (as what contradiction is there which superior genius

[t] DIONYS. HALICARN. EP. AD C. POMP. p. 205. *Edit. Huds.*

cannot reconcile?) yet it sometimes failed even in his hands. And as a French writer well expresses it, Le DIVIN *Plato, pour avoir voulu s'elever trop au dessus des hommes, est souvent tombè dans un* GALIMATIAS *pompeux que quelques uns confondent avec le* SUBLIME. The PHAEDRUS, though the most remarkable, is not the only example of such mischance in the writings of this great man.

317. VERAS HINC DUCERE VOCES.] *Truth*, in poetry, means such an expression, as conforms to the general nature of things; *falshood*, that, which, however suitable to the particular instance in view, doth yet not correspond to such *general nature*. To attain to this *truth* of expression in dramatic poetry two things are prescribed: 1. A diligent study of the Socratic philosophy; and 2. A masterly knowledge and comprehension of human life. The *first*, because it is the peculiar distinction of this school *ad veritatem vitæ propius accedere*. [Cic. de Or. i. 51.] And the *latter*, as rendering the imitation more universally striking. This will be understood by reflecting that *truth* may be followed too closely in works of imitation, as is evident in two respects. For, 1. the artist, when he would give a Copy of nature, may confine himself too scrupulously to the exhibition of *particulars*, and so fail of representing the general idea of the *kind*. Or, 2. in applying himself to give the *general* idea, he may collect it from an enlarged view of *real* life, whereas

it were still better taken from the nobler conception of it as subsisting only in the *mind.* This last is the kind of censure we pass upon the *Flemish* school of painting, which takes its model from real nature, and not, as the *Italian,* from the contemplative idea of beauty[u]. The *former* corresponds to that other fault objected also to the Flemish masters, which consists in their copying from particular odd and grotesque nature in contradistinction to general and graceful nature.

We see then that in deviating from particular and partial, the poet more faithfully imitates *universal,* truth. And thus an answer occurs to that refined argument, which Plato invented and urged, with much seeming complacency, against poetry. It is, that *poetical imitation is at a great distance from truth.* "Poetical expression, says the Philosopher, is the copy of the poet's own conceptions; the poet's conception, of things, and things, of the standing archetype, as existing in the divine mind. Thus the poet's expression, is a copy at third hand, from the primary, original truth." [Plat. De rep. l. x.] Now the diligent study of this rule of the poet obviates this reasoning at once. For, by abstracting from existences all that peculiarly respects and dis-

[u] In conformity with the *Antique. Nec enim Phidias, cum faceret Jovis formam aut Minervæ, contemplabatur aliquem e quo similitudinem duceret: sed ipsius in mente incidebat* species pulchritudinis eximia quædam, *quam intuens in eaque defixus ad illius similitudinem artem et manum dirigebat* [Cic. Orat. 2.]

criminates the *individual*, the poet's conception, as it were neglecting the intermediate particular objects, catches, as far as may be, and reflects the divine archetypal idea, and so becomes itself the copy or image of truth. Hence too we are taught the force of that unusual encomium on poetry by the great critic, *that it is something more severe and philosophical than history*, φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν. The reason follows, which is now very intelligible; ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει. [Περ. ποιητ. κ. θ.] And this will further explain an essential difference, as we are told, between the two great rivals of the Greek stage. Sophocles, in return to such as objected a want of truth in his characters, used to plead, *that he drew men such as they ought to be, Euripides such as they were.* Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη, αὐτὸς μὲν οἵους δεῖ ποιεῖν, Εὐριπίδης δὲ οἷοί εἰσι. [Περ. ποιητ. κ. κε.] The meaning of which is, Sophocles, from his more extended commerce with mankind, had enlarged and widened the narrow, partial conception, arising from the contemplation of *particular* characters, into a complete comprehension of the *kind.* Whereas the philosophic Euripides, having been mostly conversant in the academy, when he came to look into life, keeping his eye too intent on single, really existing personages, sunk the *kind* in the *individual;* and so painted his characters naturally indeed, and *truly*, with regard to the objects in view, but sometimes

without that general and universally striking likeness, which is demanded to the full exhibition of poetical truth.

But here an objection meets us, which must not be overlooked. It will be said, "that philosophic speculations are more likely to render men's views *abstract* and *general* than to confine them to *individuals*. This latter is a fault arising from the *small number* of objects men happen to contemplate: and may be removed not only by taking a view of many *particulars*, which is knowledge of the world; but also by reflecting on the *general nature* of men, as it appears in good books of morality. For the writers of such books form their *general* notion of human nature from an extensive experience (either their own, or that of others) without which their writings are of no value." The answer, I think, is this. *By reflecting on the general nature of man* the philosopher learns, what is the tenor of action arising from the predominancy of certain qualities or properties: *i. e.* in general, what that conduct is, which the imputed character requires. But to perceive clearly and certainly, how far, and with what degree of strength this or that character will, on particular occasions, most probably shew itself, this is the fruit only of a knowledge of the world. Instances of a want of this knowledge cannot be supposed frequent in such a writer, as Euripides; nor, when they occur, so glaring as to strike a common reader. They are niceties, which can only be

discerned by the true critic; and even to *him*, at this distance of time, from an ignorance of the Greek manners, that may possibly appear a fault, which is a real beauty. It would therefore be dangerous to think of pointing out the places, which Aristotle might believe liable to this censure in Euripides. I will however presume to mention one, which, if not justly criticized, will, at least, serve to illustrate my meaning.

The story of his *Electra* is well known. The poet had to paint, in the character of this princess, a virtuous, but fierce, resentful woman; stung by a sense of personal ill treatment; and instigated to the revenge of a father's death, by still stronger motives. A disposition of this warm temperament, it might be concluded by the philosopher in his closet, would be prompt to shew itself. *Electra* would, on any proper occasion, be ready to avow her resentment, as well as to forward the execution of her purpose. But to what lengths would this *resentment* go? *i. e.* what degree of fierceness might *Electra* express, without affording occasion to a person widely skilled in mankind, and the operation of the passions, to say, "this is improbable?" Here abstract theories will be of little service. Even a moderate acquaintance with real life will be unable to direct us. Many individuals may have fallen under observation, that will justify the poet in carrying the expression of such a *resentment* to any extreme. History would, perhaps, furnish exam-

ples, in which a virtuous resentment hath been carried even farther than is here represented by the poet. What way then of determining the precise bounds and limits of it? Only by observing in numerous instances, *i. e.* from a large extensive knowledge of practical life, how far it usually, in such characters, and under such circumstances, prevails. Hence a difference of representation will arise in proportion to the extent of that *knowledge.* Let us now see, how the character before us, hath, in fact, been managed by Euripides.

In that fine scene, which passes between Electra and Orestes, whom as yet she suspects not to be her brother, the conversation very naturally turns upon Electra's distresses, and the author of them, Clytæmnestra, as well as on her hopes of deliverance from them by the means of Orestes. The dialogue upon this proceeds:

*Or.* What then of Orestes, were he to return to this Argos?

*El.* Ah! wherefore that question, when there is no prospect of his return at all?

*Or.* But supposing he should return, how would he go about to revenge the death of his father?

*El.* In the same way, in which that father suffered from the daring attempts of his enemies.

*Or.* And could you then dare to undertake with him the murder of your mother?

*El.* Yes, with that very steel, with which she murdered my father.

*Or.* And am I at liberty to relate this to your brother, as your fixed resolution?

*El.* I desire only to live, till I have murdered my mother. The Greek is still stronger:

*May I die, as soon as I have murdered my mother!*

Now that this last sentence is absolutely unnatural, will not be pretended. There have been doubtless many examples, under the like circumstances, of an expression of revenge carried thus far. Yet, I think, we can hardly help being a little shocked at the fierceness of *this* expression. At least *Sophocles* has not thought fit to carry it to that extreme. In him, *Electra* contents herself with saying to *Orestes*, on a similar occasion:

"The conduct of this affair now rests upon you. "Only let me observe this to you, that, had I been "left alone, I would not have failed in one of these "two purposes, either to deliver myself gloriously, "or to perish gloriously."

Whether this representation of Sophocles be not more agreeable to *truth*, as collected from wide observation, i. e. from human nature at large, than that of Euripides, the capable reader will judge. If it be, the reason I suppose to have been, *that Sophocles painted his characters, such, as, from attending to numerous instances of the same kind, he would conclude they ought to be; Euripides, such, as a narrower sphere of observation had persuaded him they were.*

319. INTERDUM SPECIOSA LOCIS, &c.] The poet's science in *ethics* will principally shew itself in these two ways, 1. in furnishing proper matter for general reflexion on human life and conduct; and, 2. in a due adjustment of the manners. By the former of these two applications of moral knowledge a play becomes, what the poet calls, *speciosa locis*, i. e. (for the term is borrowed from the rhetoricians) *striking in its moral topics:* a merit of the highest importance on the ancient stage, and which, if prudently employed in subserviency to the *latter* more essential requisite of the drama, *a just expression of the manners,* will deserve to be so reputed at all times, and on every theatre. The danger is, lest a studied, declamatory *moral,* affectedly introduced, or indulged to excess, should prejudice the natural exhibition of the *characters,* and so convert *the image of human life* into an unaffecting, philosophical dialogue.

319. MORATAQUE RECTE FABULA, &c.] This judgment of the poet, in regard of the superior efficacy of *manners*, is generally thought to be contradicted by Aristotle; who in treating this subject, observes, " that let a piece be never so perfect in the " *manners, sentiments,* and *style,* it will not so " well answer the end and purpose of tragedy, as if " defective in these, and finished only in the fable " and composition." Ἐάν τις ἐφεξῆς θῇ ῥήσεις ἠθικὰς καὶ λέξεις καὶ διανοίας εὖ πεποιημένας, ἃ ποιήσει

ὃ ἦν τῆς τραγῳδίας ἔργον, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ καταδεεστέροις τούτοις κεχρημένη τραγῳδία, ἔχουσα δε μῦθον καὶ σύστασιν πραγμάτων. Κεφ. ς'. M. Dacier thinks to clear this matter by saying, "that what Aristotle "remarks holds true of tragedy, but not of comedy, "of which alone Horace is here speaking." But granting that the artificial contexture of the fable is less necessary to the perfection of comedy, than of tragedy (as it certainly is), yet the tenor of this whole division, exhorting to correctness in general, makes it unquestionable, that Horace must intend to include *both*. The case, as it seems to me, is this. The poet is not comparing the respective importance of the *fable* and *manners*, but of the *manners* and *diction*, under this word including also *numbers*. He gives them the preference *not* to a *good plot*, nor even to *fine sentiments*, but to *versus inopes rerum nugæque canoræ*. The *art* he speaks of, is the art of *expressing* the thoughts properly, gracefully, and harmoniously: the *pondus* is the force and energy of good *versification*. *Venus* is a general term including both kinds of beauty. *Fabula* does not mean the *fable* (in distinction from the rest) but simply *a play*.

323. GRAIIS INGENIUM, &c.] The Greeks being eminent for *philosophy*, especially *morals*; the last observation naturally gives rise to this. For the transition is easy from their superiority, as philosophers, to their superiority as poets; and the more

easy, as the latter is shewn to be, in part, the effect of the former. Now this superiority of the Greeks in genius and eloquence (which would immediately occur, on mentioning the *Socraticæ chartæ)* being seen and confessed, we are led to ask, "whence this arises." The answer is, from their making *glory*, not *gain*, the object of their wishes.

330. AERUGO ET CURA PECULI CUM SEMEL IMBUERIT, &c.] This *love of gain*, to which Horace imputes the imperfect state of the Roman poetry, hath been uniformly assigned, by the wisdom of ancient times, as the specific bane of arts and letters. *Longinus* and *Quintilian* account, from hence, for the decay of eloquence, *Galen* of physic, *Petronius* of painting, and *Pliny*, of the whole circle of the liberal arts. An ingenious modern is indeed for carrying his views much further. He, it seems, would account [Refl. sur la Poes. et sur la Peint. v. ii. § xiv.] for this *public degeneracy* of taste and literature, not from the malignity of the selfish passions, but the baleful influences of the air, emulating, I suppose, herein, the wisdom of that philosophy, which teaches to lay the *private degeneracy* of individualson the stars. Thus much however may be true, that other causes have generally co-operated with it. Some of these, as might be shewn, did not escape the attention of these wise ancients. Yet they did right to insist chiefly on *this*, which is every way equal to the effect ascribed to it. It is so

in its *nature*: For being, as Longinus calls it, νόσημα μικροποιὸν, *a disease which narrows and contracts the soul*, it must, of course, restrain the generous efforts and expansions of genius; cramp the free powers and energies of the mind, and render it unapt to open itself to wide views, and to the projection of great, extensive designs. It is so in its *consequences*. For, as one says elegantly, *when the passion of avarice grows general in a country, the temples of Honour are soon pulled down, and all men's sacrifices are made to Fortune*[w]. Thus extinguishing the sense of honour, that divinest movement in our frame, and the only one, which can invigorate the mind under the long labours of invention, it must needs be, that the fire and high spirit of genius go out with it; and dragging in its train the *love of pleasure*, that unmanliest of all the passions, it diffuses such a languor and impotency over the mind, as must leave it at length a prey to a supine wasting indolence; till, as Longinus observes of his own age (and let every friend to letters deprecate the omen), Πάντες ἐγκαταβιῶμεν, ἐκ ἄλλως πονοῦντες, ἢ ἀναλαμβάνοντες, εἰ μὴ ἐπαίνου καὶ ἡδονῆς ἕνεκα, ἀλλὰ μὴ τῆς ζήλου καὶ τιμῆς ἀξίας ποτὲ ὠφελείας.

333. AUT PRODESSE VOLUNT, AUT DELECTARE POETAE, &c.] Though these lines have the appear-

[w] Sir *William Temple*.

ance of general criticism, yet do they more especially respect the dramatic poesy. This will be evident from attending to the context. The full boast and glory of the drama is to *delight* and *instruct* mankind. 1. The latter praise was more especially due to the ancient tragic muse, who did not think it sufficient to paint lovely pourtraitures of *public* and *social* virtue, and to call in the moralizing chorus to her assistance, but, which was one of her discriminating characters, she was perpetually inculcating every branch of true moral in those brief sententious precepts, which inform and solemnize her page. To these precepts then the poet manifestly refers in those lines,

*Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis; ut cito dicta*
*Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.*

But what follows is still clearer, [2.] The other end of the drama is to *entertain*, and this by the means of *probable fiction.*

*Ficta, voluptatis causa, sint proxima veris.*

And the poet applies this to the case of the drama in express words:

*Ne quodcunque volet, poscat sibi fabula credi:*
*Neu pransæ Lamiæ vivum puerum extrahat alvo.*

The instance of *Lamia*, as Mr. Dacier observes, is certainly taken from some poet of that time, who had been guilty of this misconduct. The reader may learn from hence, how intently Horace pursues his design of criticizing the *Roman stage*, when, in

treating a subject, from its nature, the most general of any in the epistle, *viz. critical correctness*, we yet find him so industriously recurring to this point.

343. MISCUIT UTILE DULCI.] The unnatural separation of the DULCE ET UTILE hath done almost as much hurt in *letters* as that of the HONESTUM ET UTILE, which Tully somewhere complains of, hath done in *morals*. For while the polite writer, as he is called, contents himself with the *former* of these qualities, and the man of erudition with the *latter*, it comes to pass, as the same writer expresses it, that ET DOCTIS ELOQUENTIA POPULARIS, ET DISERTIS ELEGANS DOCTRINA DESIT [Orat. iii.]

363. HAEC AMAT OBSCURUM, VOLET HAEC SUB LUCE VIDERI.] Cicero hath given the same precept in relation to oratory, *habeat illa in dicendo admiratio ac summa laus umbram aliquam et recessum, quo magis id, quod erit illuminatum, extare atque eminere videatur.* [De orat. l. iii. c. xxvi.]

373. MEDIOCRIBUS ESSE POETIS NON HOMINES, &c.] This judgment, however severe it may seem, is according to the practice of the best critics. We have a remarkable instance in the case of *Apollonius Rhodius*, who, though, in the judgment of Quintilian, the author of a no contemptible poem, yet, on account of that *equal mediocrity*, which every

where prevails in him, was struck out of the list of good writers by such sovereign judges of poetical merit, as Aristophanes and Aristarchus. [Quint. l. x. c. i.]

403. DICTAE PER CARMINA SORTES,] The oracles here spoken of, are such as respect not *private persons* (whom a natural curiosity, quickened by anxious superstition, has ever prompted to pry into their future fortunes) but *entire communities*; and for these there was little place, till Ambition had inspired great and eventful designs, and by involving the fate of nations, had rendered the knowledge of futurity *important*. Hence, in marking the progress of ancient poesy, Horace judiciously postpones *oracles*, to the *celebration* of martial *prowess*, as being that, which gave the principal *eclat* to them. This species of poetry then is rightly placed, though it be true, as the commentators have objected, that oracles were much ancienter than Homer, and the Trojan war.

404. ET VITAE MONSTRATA VIA EST;] Meaning the writings of *Theognis*, *Phocylides*, *Hesiod*, and others, which, consisting wholly of moral precepts, are elegantly said to lay open, or discover *the road of life*. Mr. Dacier's interpretation, which makes the poet mean *physics* by *viam vitæ*, is supported by no reason. *Il ne faut pas*, says he, *entendre ceci de la philosophie et des mœurs*; CAR *Horace se*

*contrediroit, puisque il a dit que ce fut le premier soin de la poesie.* The learned critic did not consider, that the first care of poesy, as explained above, and as employed by *Orpheus* and *Amphion*, was to inculcate *policy*, not *moral*.

404. ET GRATIA REGUM, PIERIIS TENTATA MODIS, LUDUSQUE REPERTUS, ET LONGORUM OPERUM FINIS: NE FORTE PUDORI SIT TIBI MUSA LYRAE SOLERS, ET CANTOR APOLLO.] This is one of those master-strokes, which make the sovereign charm of this poet. But the way in which it hath been understood, extinguishes all its grace and beauty. *On les vers employa*, says an interpreter, who speaks the sense of the rest, *à gagner la faveur des rois, et on les mit de tous les jeux et de tous les spectacles, qu'on inventa pour se delasser de ses longs travaux et de toutes ses fatigues. Je vous dis cela afin que vous n'ayez point de honte de faire la cour aux Muses et à Apollon.* And, lest this should not seem explicit enough, he adds in a couple of notes, that by *ludus repertus*, &c. *il* [le poete] *veut parler des tragedies et des comedies que l'on faisoit jour dans les fêtes solemnelles.* And then, as to the *ne forte pudori*, *Cela prouve qu' Horace ne fait cet eloge de la poesie que pour empecher que Pison n'en fût degouté.* Can any thing be more insipid? For could the poet think so meanly of his art, as to believe it wanted an apology? Or had the *courtier* so little address, as to direct that apology immediately

to the Pisos? Besides, what species of poesy is it that he labours to excuse? Why, according to this interpretation, the *dramatic*: the supreme boast of his art, and the main subject of the epistle. And in what *manner* does he excuse it? Why, in recommending it, as an agreeable amusement. But his master, Aristotle, would have furnished him with a nobler plea: and 'tis certain, the ancients talked at another rate of the use and end of the drama. Let us see then, if the sense, given in the commentary, will bring any relief to the poet. In fact, this whole passage [from *et vitæ*, &c. to *cantor Apollo*] obliquely glances at the two sorts of poetry peculiarly cultivated by himself, and is an indirect apology for his own choice of them. For 1. *vitæ monstrata via est* is the character of his *sermones*. And 2. all the rest, of his *Odes*. These are recommended, agreeably to their nature, 1. as of use to *conciliate the favour of princes*; hereby glancing at the success of his own odes, and, with the happiest address, insinuating the regard, which Augustus paid to letters. 2. As contributing to the mirth and entertainment of feasts, and especially as holding a principal place in the celebration of those more sacred, secular festivities *(longorum operum finem)* which could not be duly solemnized, without the ministration of the lyric muse.

*Castis cum pueris ignara puella mariti,*
*Disceret unde preces, vatem ni musa dedisset?*

2 Ep. i. 132.

And again:

*ego Diis amicum,*
*Sæculo festas referente luces,*
*Reddidi carmen docilis modorum*
*Vatis Horatii.* Carm. Sec.

In another place both ends are expressed:

*testudo*
*Divitum* MENSIS *et amica* TEMPLIS. 3 Od. xi.

Where it may be observed, this double character of lyric poetry exactly corresponds to that, which the poet had before expressly given of it in this very epistle: the *gratia regum* being the same as

*Musa dedit fidibus Divos puerosque Deorum*
*Et pugilem victorem et equum certamine primum.*
v. 83.

And *ludusque repertus,* describing its other office,

*Et juvenum curas et libera vina referre.* ib.

In this view the following line, which apologizes, not for poesy in general, or its noblest species, the drama, but for his own lyrics only, hath, as the reader perceives, infinite grace; and is peculiarly marked with that vein of exquisite humour, so suited to the genius of the epistle, and which makes one of the distinguishing beauties of the poet. It hath also an extreme *propriety;* the levity of the ode admitting, or rather requiring some apology to the Pisos; who would be naturally led to think but meanly of it, in comparison of the sublimer drama-

tic poetry. I must add, the very terms of the apology so expresly define and characterize lyric poetry, that it is something strange, it should have escaped vulgar notice: *musa lyræ solers* being evidently explained by *Romanæ fidicen lyræ* [4 Od. iii. 23.] and the epithet *cantor*, describing Apollo, as clearly as words can do it, in the peculiar character of *Lyric*.

407. CANTOR APOLLO. NATURA FIBRET, &c.] The transition is delicate, and a fine instance of that kind of method, which the Epistle demands. The poet had just been speaking of the ode, and its inspirer, *cantor Apollo*; and this, in the natural train of his ideas, suggested that enthusiasm, and stretch of genius, which is at once the characteristic and glory of the lyric composition. And this was ground enough, in an Epistle, to pass on to say something concerning the power and influence of genius in poetry in general. It was for want of attending to so plain a reflexion as this, that the excellent Heinsius trifled so egregiously, in his transpositions of the Epistles, and in particular of this very place. And the hasty censures, which M. Dacier passed on the poet's method, are apparently owing to no other cause. [See his introduct. remarks.] But to declare my sense at parting, of the *latter* of these critics, I would say, as he himself does of the former, *C'est assez parlé contre M.* DACIER, *dont j'estime et admire autant la profonde érudition, que*

*je condamne la mauvais usage qu'il en a fait en quelques rencontres.*

410. AETERNUS SIC ALTERA POSCIT OPEM RES, ET CONJURAT AMICE.] This conclusion, "that art "and nature must conspire to the production of a "perfect piece," is, in the general, unquestionably just. If we would know the distinct powers and provinces of each, a fine passage in Longinus will inform us. For, of the five sources of the sublime, enumerated by that critic, two only, "a grandeur of "conception, and the pathetic," come from *nature:* the rest, "a just arrangement of figures," "a splen-"did diction," and "dignity of composition," are of the province of *art.* Yet, though their powers are thus distinct, each, in order to attain its due perfection, must conspire, and be consociated, with the other. For that "sublime of conception" and "pathetic enthusiasm" never make a more sure and lasting impression, than when cloathed in the graces, and moderated by the sober sense of *art:* as, on the contrary, the milder beauties of "language" and "artificial composition" are never so secure of seizing the attention, as when raised and inspirited by the *pathos,* or *sublime.* So that the nature of the union, here recommended, is such, as makes it not only necessary to the completion of that great end, *viz.* the glory of perfect composition; but that either part, in the alliance, may fully effect its own. All which is but the larger explication of another

passage in Longinus, who teaches, that ΤΟΤΕ Η ΤΕΧΝΗ ΤΕΛΕΙΟΣ, ΗΝΙΚ' ΑΝ ΦΥΣΙΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΔΟΚΗΙ· Η Δ' ΑΥ ΦΥΣΙΣ ΕΠΙΤΥΧΗΣ, ΟΤΑΝ ΛΑΝΘΑΝΟΥΣΑ ΠΕΡΙΕΧΗΙ ΤΗΝ ΤΕΧΝΗΝ. [περ. ὑψ. τμη. κϛ'.]

But here, in parting, it will be amusing, perhaps, to the curious reader to observe, what perpetual matter of debate this question hath furnished to the ancient learned.

It seems first to have taken its rise from the high pretension of poets to inspiration [see Pind. Od. iii. Nem.], which was afterwards understood in too literal a sense, and in time extended to all works of genius or imitation. The orator, who, as Cicero tells us, is *near a-kin to the poet*, set up the same claim; principally, as it should seem, on the authority of Socrates, who, taking occasion from the ill use that had been made of *rhetoric*, to decry it as an *art*, was herein followed by the most illustrious of his scholars; amongst whom was Aristotle, [Quinct. l. ii. c. 17.] who had written a set treatise professedly with this view, though his books of rhetoric proceed on very different principles. The question afterwards appeared of so much moment to Cicero, that he discussed it in form, in one of his dialogues De Oratore. And Quinctilian, in still later times, found himself obliged to resume the same debate, and hath accordingly considered it in an entire chapter.

The long continuance of so frivolous a dispute, and which admits so easy a decision, would go near to persuade one, if, as Shakespeare speaks, *they had not the privilege of antiquity upon them*, that the pens of the ancient *literati* were not always more wisely employed, than those of modern controversialists. If we ask the reason, it would seem to be owing to that ambitious spirit of subtlety and refinement, which, as Quintilian observes, *puts men upon teaching not what they believe to be true, but what, from the falsehood or apparent strangeness of the matter, they expect the praise of ingenuity from being able to maintain.* This, I say, might seem to be the cause of so much perversity, on the first view, and unquestionably it had its influence. But the truth is, the real cause was something more general and extensive. It was, in fact, that *natural proneness*, so Longinus terms it, *in mankind, to censure and degrade things present*, ἴδιον ἀνθρώπου καταμέμφεσθαι τὰ παρόντα. This in nothing holds truer, than in what concerns the state of literature; as may be seen from that unwearied industry of the learned to decry whatever appears to be the prevailing taste of the times; whether it be in suggesting some defect to be made good by future improvements; or, as is more common, because the easier and less invidious task, in setting up, and magnifying some former examples of a different cast and merit. Thus, in the case before us, exquisite art and commanding genius, being the two only means of rising to

superior literary excellence, in proportion as any age became noted for the one, it was constantly defamed, and the preference given to the other. So, during the growth of letters in any state, when a sublimity of sentiment and strength of expression make, as under those circumstances they always will, the characteristic of the times, the critic, disgusted with the rude workings of nature, affects to admire only the nicer finishings and proportions of art. When, let but the growing experience of a few years refine and perfect the public taste, and what was before traduced as roughness and barbarity, becomes at once nerves, dignity, and force. Then art is effeminacy; and judgment want of spirit. All now is rapture and inspiration. The exactest modern compositions are unmanly and unnatural, *et solos veteres legendos putant, neque in ullis aliis esse naturalem eloquentiam et robur viris dignum arbitrantur.* [Quinct. l. x. c. i.] The truth of this observation might be justified from many examples. The learning and art of *Pacuvius* (for so I understand the epithet *doctus)* carried it before the sublime of *Accius*; just as in elder Greece the smooth and correct *Simonides, tenuis Simonides*, as Quinctilian characterizes him, bore away the prize from the lofty and high-spirited *Æschylus*. Afterwards indeed the case was altered. The Athenians, grown exact in the rules of good writing, became so enamoured of the bold flights of Æschylus, as with a little correction to admit him on the stage, who, by this

means, frequently gained the prize from a polite and knowing people, for what had certainly lost it him in the simpler, and less informed theatre of his own times. Thus too it fared with the elder Latin poets, who, though admired indeed in their own age, but with considerable abatement from the reason before assigned, were perfectly idolized in that of Augustus; so as to require the sharpest satire of our poet, to correct the malevolent principle from whence the affectation arose. But the observation holds of our own writers. There was a time, when the art of JONSON was set above the divinest raptures of SHAKESPEARE. The present age is well convinced of the mistake. And now the genius of SHAKESPEARE is idolized in its turn. Happily for the public taste, it can scarcely be too much so. Yet, should any, in the rage of erecting trophies to the genius of ancient poesy, presume to violate the recent honours of more correct poets, the cause of such critical perversity will be ever the same. For all admiration of past times, when excessive, is still to be accounted for the same way,

*Ingeniis non ille favet plauditque sepultis,*
*Nostra sed impugnat, nos nostraque lividus odit.*

THE END OF THE NOTES ON THE ART OF POETRY.

# Q. HORATII FLACCI

## EPISTOLA AD AUGUSTUM.

TO THE REVEREND

# MR. WARBURTON.

REVEREND SIR,

GIVE me leave to present to you the following Essay on the *Epistle to Augustus*; which, whatever other merit it may want, is secure of this, that it hath been planned upon the best model. For I know not what should hinder me from declaring to you in this public manner, that it was the early pleasure I received from what you had written of this sort, which *first* engaged me in the province of criticism. And, if I have taken upon me to illustrate *another* of the finest pieces of antiquity after the *same method*, it is because I find myself encouraged to do so by higher considerations, than even the Authority of your example.

CRITICISM, considered in its ancient and noblest office of doing justice to the merits of great writers, more especially in works of poetry and invention, demands, to its perfect execution, these two qualities: *a philosophic spirit*, capable of penetrating the fundamental reasons of excellence in every different species of composition; and *a strong imagi-*

*nation*, the parent of what we call *true taste*, enabling the critic to feel the full force of his author's excellence himself, and to impress a lively sense of it upon others. Each of these abilities is necessary. For by means of philosophy, criticism, which were otherwise a vague and superficial thing, acquires the soundness and solidity of science. And from the *power of fancy*, it derives that light and energy and spirit, which are wanting to provoke the public emulation and carry the general conclusions of reason into practice.

Of these talents (to regard them in their separate state) that of a *strong imagination*, as being the commoner of the two, one would naturally suppose should be the first to exert itself in the service of criticism. And thus it seems, in fact, to have happened. For there were very early in Greece a sort of men, who, under the name of RHAPSODISTS, made it their business to illustrate the beauties of their favourite writers. Though their art, indeed, was very simple; for it consisted only in *acting* the finest passages of their works, and in *repeating* them, with a rapturous kind of vehemence, to an ecstatic auditory. Whence it appears, that criticism, as being yet in its infancy, was wholly turned to *admiration*; a passion which true *judgment* as little indulges in the schools of *Art*, as sound philosophy in those of *Nature*. Accordingly these enraptured declaimers, though they travelled down to the politer ages, could not subsist in them. The

fine ridicule of Plato, in one of his Dialogues[a], and the growing taste for just thinking, seem perfectly to have discredited this folly. And it was presently seen and acknowledged even by the Rhapsodist himself, that, how *divinely* soever he might feel himself affected by the magnetic virtue of the muse, yet, as he could give no intelligible account of its subtle operations, he was assuredly no *Artist*; ΘΕΙΟΝ εἶναι καὶ μὴ ΤΕΧΝΙΚΟΝ ἐπαινέτην.

From this time they, who took upon themselves the office of commenting and recommending the great writers of Greece, discharged it in a very different manner. Their researches grew severe, inquisitive, and rational. And no wonder; for the person, who now took the lead in these studies, and set the fashion of them, was a *philosopher*, and, which was happy for the advancement of this art, the justest philosopher of antiquity. Hence *scientific* or speculative criticism attained to perfection, at once; and appeared in all that severity of reason and accuracy of method, which Aristotle himself could bestow upon it.

But now this might almost seem as violent an extreme as the other. For though to *understand* be better than to *admire*, yet the generality of readers *cannot*, or *will not*, understand, where there is *nothing* for them to admire. So that *reason*, for her own sake, is obliged to borrow something of the

[a] Ἴων.

dress, and to mimic the airs, of *fancy*: And Aristotle's *reason* was too proud to submit to this management.

Hence, the critical plan, which the Stagirite had formed with such rigour of science, however it might satisfy the curious speculatist, wanted to be *relieved* and set off to the common eye by the heightenings of eloquence. This, I observed, was the easier task of the two; and yet it was very long before it was *successfully* attempted. Amongst other reasons of this delay, the principal, as you observe, might be the fall of the public freedom of Greece, which soon after followed. For then, instead of the free and manly efforts of genius, which alone could accomplish such a reformation, the trifling spirit of the times declined into mere verbal amusements: "whence," as you say, "so great a "cloud of scholiasts and grammarians so soon over-"spread the learning of Greece, when once that "famous community had lost its liberty[b]."

And what Greece was thus unable, of a long time, to furnish, we shall in vain seek in another great community, which soon after flourished in all liberal studies. The genius of Rome was bold and elevated enough for this task. But Criticism, of any kind, was little cultivated, never professed as an *art*, by this people. The specimens we have of their ability in this way (of which the most elegant,

[b] Pope's Works, vol. V. p. 244. 8vo.

beyond dispute, are the two epistles to *Augustus* and the *Pisos)* are slight occasional attempts; made in the negligence of common sense, and adapted to the peculiar exigencies of their own taste and learning: and not by any means the regular productions of *art*, professedly bending itself to this work, and ambitious to give the last finishing to the critical system.

For so great an effort as this we are to look back to the confines of Greece. And there at length, and even from beneath the depression of slavery (but with a spirit that might have done honour to its age of greatest liberty) a CRITIC arose, singularly qualified for so generous an undertaking. His profession, which was that of a *rhetorical sophist*, required him to be fully instructed in the graces and embellishments of eloquence; and these, the vigour of his genius enabled him to comprehend in their utmost force and beauty. In a word, LONGINUS was the person, whom, of all the critics of antiquity, nature seems to have formed with the proper talents to give the last honour to his profession, and penetrate the very soul of fine writing.

Yet so bounded is human *wit*, and with such difficulty is human *art* compleated, that even here the advantage, which had been so fortunately gained on the one hand, was, in great measure, lost and forfeited on the other. He had softened indeed the severity of Aristotle's plan; but, in doing this, had gone back again too far into the manner of the

admiring Rhapsodist. In short, with the brightest views of nature and true beauty, which the finest imagination could afford to the best critic, he now wanted, in a good degree, that precision, and depth of thought, which had so eminently distinguished his predecessor. For, as Plotinus long ago observed of him, *though he had approved himself a master of polite literature, he was* NO *Philosopher*; ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΜΕΝ, ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΣ ΔΕ ΟΥΔΑΜΩΣ.

Thus the art had been shifting reciprocally into two extremes. And in one or other of these extremes, it was likely to continue. For the fame and eminent ability of their great founders had made them considered as *models*, in their different ways, of perfect criticism. Only it was easy to foresee which of them the humour of succeeding times would be most disposed to emulate. The catching enthusiasm and picturesque fancy of the *one* would be sure to prevail over the coolness and austerity of the *other*. Accordingly in the last and present century, when now the diligence of learned men had, by restoring the purity, opened an easy way to the study, of the old classics, a numberless tribe of commentators have attempted, after the manner of Longinus, to *flourish* on the excellencies of their composition. And some of them, indeed, succeeded so well in this method, that one is not to wonder it soon became the popular and only authorized form of what was reputed *just Criticism*. Yet, as nothing but superior genius could make it

tolerable even in the best of these, it was to be expected (what experience hath now fully shewn), that it would at length, and in ordinary hands, degenerate into the most unmeaning, frivolous, and disgustful jargon, that ever discredited polite letters.

This, Sir, was the state in which you received *modern Criticism:* a state, which could only shew you, that, of the two models, antiquity had furnished to our use, we had learned, by an awkward imitation of it, to abuse the *worst*. But it did not content your zeal for the service of letters barely to remedy this *abuse*. It was not enough, in your enlarged view of things, to restore either of these models to its ancient splendour. They were both to be revived; or rather a new original plan of criticism was to be struck out, which should unite the virtues of each of them. The experiment was made on the TWO greatest of our own poets; and, by reflecting all the lights of the imagination on the severest reason, every thing was effected, which the warmest admirer of ancient art could promise to himself from such an union. But you went farther. By joining to these powers a perfect insight into human nature, and so ennobling the exercise of *literary*, by the addition of the justest moral, censure, you have now, at length, advanced CRITICISM to its full glory.

Not but, considering the inveterate foible of mankind, which the poet so justly satirizes in the following work, I mean that, which disposes them to

malign and depreciate all the efforts of wit and virtue,

— nisi quae terris semota suisque
Temporibus defuncta videt —

Considering, I say, this temper of mankind, you may sooner, perhaps, expect the censures of the dull and envious of all denominations, than the candid applause of the public, even for this service.

I apprehend this consequence the rather, because criticism, though it be *the last fruit of literary experience*, is more exposed to the cavils of ignorance and vanity, than, perhaps, any other species of learned application: all men being forward to judge, and few men giving themselves leave to doubt of their being able to judge, of the merits of well-known and popular writers.

Nor is this all: When writers of a certain rank condescend to this work of criticism, the innovation excites a very natural ferment in the *men of the profession*.

Their JEALOUSY is alarmed, as if there was a design to strip them of the only honour they can reasonably pretend to, that of sitting in judgment on the *inventions* of their betters. But to JUDGE, as well as to INVENT, is thought a violent encroachment in the republic of Letters; not unlike the ambition of the Roman emperors, who would be consuls, and censors too, that is, would have the privilege of excluding from the senate, as well as of presiding in it.

But if jealousy were out of the case, their MALIGNITY would be much inflamed by this intrusion. For who can bear to see his own weak endeavours in any art, disgraced by a consummate model?

Besides, to say the truth, the conceptions of such writers, as I before spoke of, lie so remote from vulgar apprehension, that, without either *jealousy* or *malignity*, DULLNESS itself will be sure to create them many peevish detractors. For an ordinary critic can scarce help finding fault with what he does not understand, or being angry where he has no ideas.

On all these accounts it may possibly happen, as I said, that your critical labours will draw upon you much popular resentment and invective.

But if such should be the *present* effect of your endeavours to cultivate and complete this elegant part of literature, you, who know the temper of the learned world, and, by your eminent merits, have so oft provoked its injustice, will not be disturbed or surprized at it: much less should it discourage those who are disposed to do you more right, from celebrating, and, as they find themselves able, from copying your example;

For USE will father what 's begot by SENSE,

as well in this, as in other instances.

You see, Sir, what there is of encomium in the turn of this Letter, was intended not so much for your sake, as my own. Had my purpose been any

other, I must have chosen very ill among the various parts of your character to take *this* for the subject of an address to you. For, after all I have said and think of your critical abilities, it might seem almost as strange in a panegyrist on Mr. Warburton to tell of his admirable criticisms on POPE and SHAKESPEAR, as it would be in him, who should design an encomium on Socrates, to insist on his excellent sculpture of MERCURY and the GRACES. Yet there is a time, when it may be allowed to lay a stress on the amusements of such men. It is, when an adventurer in either *art* would do an honour to his profession.

I am, with the truest esteem,

Reverend Sir,

Your most obedient

and most humble servant,

CAMBRIDGE,
*March* 29, 1753.

R. HURD.

# Q. HORATII FLACCI

## EPISTOLA AD AUGUSTUM.

CUM tot sustineas et tanta negotia solus,
Res Italas armis tuteris, moribus ornes,
Legibus emendes; in publica commoda peccem,
Si longo sermone morer tua tempora, Caesar.

### COMMENTARY.

EPISTOLA AD AUGUSTUM.] In conducting this work, which is *an apology for the poets of his own time*, the method of the writer is no other, than that which plain sense, and the subject itself, required of him. For, as the main dislike to the Augustan poets had arisen from an *excessive reverence* paid to their elder brethren, the *first* part of the epistle [from v. 1 to 118] is very naturally laid out in the ridicule and confutation of so absurd a prejudice. And having, by this preparation, obtained a candid hearing for his defence, he then proceeds [in what follows, to the *end*] to vindicate their real *merits*; setting in view the excellencies of the *Latin poetry*, as cultivated by the great modern masters; and throwing the blame of their ill success, and of the contempt in which they had lain, not so much on themselves, or their *profession* (the dignity of *which*, in particular, he insists highly

Romulus, et Liber pater, et cum Castore Pollux, 5
Post ingentia fata, Deorum in templa recepti,
Dum terras hominumque colunt genus, aspera bella
Conponunt, agros adsignant, oppida condunt;
Ploravere suis non respondere favorem
Speratum meritis. diram qui contudit Hydram, 10
Notaque fatali portenta labore subegit,
Comperit invidiam supremo fine domari.
Urit enim fulgore suo, qui praegravat artis

COMMENTARY.

upon, and asserts with spirit) as on the vicious taste of the age, and certain unfavouring circumstances, which had accidentally concurred to dishonour *both*.

This idea of the *general* plan being comprehended, the reader will find it no difficulty to perceive the order and arrangement of *particular* parts, which the natural transition of the poet's thought insensibly drew along with it.

5—118. ROMULUS, ET LIBER PATER, &c.] The subject commences from v. 5, where, by a contrivance of great beauty, a pertinent *illustration* of the poet's argument becomes an offering of the happiest *address* to the emperor. Its *double* purpose may be seen thus. His primary intention was to take off the force of prejudice against *modern* poets, arising from the superior veneration of the *ancients*. To this end the first thing wanting was to demonstrate by some striking instance, that it was, indeed, nothing but *prejudice*; which he does effectually in taking that instance from the *heroic*, that is, the most revered, ages. For if such, whose acknowledged virtues and eminent services had raised them to the rank of *heroes*, that is, in the pagan conception of

Infra se positas: extinctus amabitur idem.
Praesenti tibi maturos largimur honores, 15
Jurandasque tuum per numen ponimus aras,
Nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes.
Sed tuus hoc populus sapiens et justus in uno,
Te nostris ducibus, te Graiis anteferendo,
Cetera nequaquam simili ratione modoque 20
Aestimat; et, nisi quae terris semota suisque

COMMENTARY.

things, to the honours of *divinity*, could not secure their fame, in their own times, against the malevolence of slander, what wonder that the race of *wits*, whose obscurer merit is less likely to dazzle the public eye, and yet, by a peculiar fatality, is more apt to awaken its jealousy, should find themselves oppressed by its rudest censure? In the *former* case the honours, which equal posterity paid to excelling worth, declare all *such* censure to have been the calumny of malice only. What reason then to conclude, it had any other original in the *latter*? This is the poet's *argument.*

But now, of these worthies themselves, whom the justice of grateful posterity had snatched out of the hands of detraction, there were some, it seems, whose illustrious services the virtue or vain-glory of the emperor most affected to emulate; and these, therefore, the poet, by an ingenious flattery, selects for examples to his general *observation*,

*Romulus, et Liber pater, et cum Castore Pollux*
*Post ingentia fata*, &c.

Further, as the good fortune of Augustus, though adorned with the *same* enviable qualities, had exempted

Temporibus defuncta videt, fastidit et odit:
Sic fautor veterum, ut Tabulas peccare vetantis,
Quas bis quinque viri sanxerunt, Foedera regum
Vel Gabiis vel cum rigidis aequata Sabinis, 25
Pontificum libros, annosa volumina Vatum,

COMMENTARY.

*him* from the injuries which had constantly befallen *those admired characters*, this peculiar circumstance in the history of his prince affords him the happiest occasion, flattery could desire, of paying distinguished honours to his glory.

*Praesenti tibi maturos largimur honores.*

And this constitutes the fine *address and compliment of his Application.*

But this justice, which Augustus had exacted, as it were, by the very authority of his virtue, from his applauding people, was but ill discharged in other instances.

*Sed tuus hoc populus sapiens et justus in uno,*
*Te nostris ducibus, te Graiis anteferendo,*
*Cetera nequaquam simili ratione modoque*
*Aestimat*, &c.

And thus the very *exception* to the general rule, which forms the encomium, leads him with advantage into his *argument*; which was to observe and expose "the malignant influence of prepossession in obstructing the "proper glories of living merit." So that, as good sense demands in every reasonable panegyric, the praise results from the nature and foundation of the subject-matter, and is not violently and reluctantly dragged into it.

Dictitet Albano Musas in monte locutas.
Si, quia Graiorum sunt antiquissima quaeque
Scripta vel optima, Romani pensantur eadem
Scriptores trutina; non est quod multa loquamur:
Nil intra est olea, nil extra est in nuce duri: 31
Venimus ad summum fortunae: pingimus, atque
Psallimus, et luctamur Achivis doctius unctis.

COMMENTARY

His general charge against his countrymen "of their "bigotted attachment to those, dignified by the name "of *ancients*, in prejudice to the just deserts of the mo-"derns," being thus delivered; and the folly of such conduct, with some agreeable exaggeration, exposed; he sets himself with a happy mixture of irony and argument, as well becomes the genius and character of the *epistle*, to confute the pretences, and overturn the very *foundations*, on which it rested.

One main support of their folly was taken from an allowed fact, viz. "That the oldest *Greek* writers were "incontestably superior to the modern ones." From whence they inferred, that it was but according to nature and the course of experience, to give the like preference to the oldest *Roman* masters.

His confutation of this sophism consists of two parts. *First*, [from v. 28 to 32] He insists on the *evident* absurdity of the opinion he is confuting. There was no reasoning with persons, capable of such *extravagant positions*. But, *secondly*, the pretended fact itself, with regard to the Greek learning, was *grossly misunderstood, or perversely applied*. For [from v. 32 to 34] it was not true, nor could it be admitted, that the very *oldest* of

Si meliora dies, ut vina, poemata reddit; 34
Scire velim, chartis pretium quotus arroget annus,
Scriptor ab hinc annos centum qui decidit, inter
Perfectos veteresque referri debet, an inter
Vilis atque novos? excludat jurgia finis.
Est vetus atque probus centum qui perficit annos.
Quid? qui deperiit minor uno mense vel anno, 40
Inter quos referendus erit? veteresne poetas,
An quos et praesens et postera respuat aetas?

COMMENTARY.

the *Greek* writers were the best, but those only, which were old, in comparison of the mere modern Greeks. The so much applauded models of Grecian antiquity were themselves *modern*, in respect of the still *older* and ruder essays of their first writers. It was long discipline and cultivation, the same which had given the Greek *artists* in the Augustan reign a superiority over the Roman, that by degrees established the good taste, and fixed the authority of the Greek *poets*; from which point it was natural and even necessary for succeeding, *i. e.* the modern Greeks to decline. But no consequence lay from hence to the advantage of the Latin poets, in question; who were wholly unfurnished with any previous study of the arts of verse; and whose works could only be compared with the very *oldest*, that is, the rude forgotten essays of the Greek poetry. So that the fine sense, so closely shut up in this concise couplet, comes out thus: "The modern Greek masters of the *fine arts* "are confessedly superior to the modern Roman. The "reason is, they have practised them longer, and with "more diligence. Just so, the modern Roman writers

Iste quidem veteres inter ponetur honeste,
Qui vel mense brevi, vel toto est junior anno.
Utor permisso, caudaeque pilos ut equinae 45
Paullatim vello; et demo unum, demo et item unum;
Dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi,
Qui redit in fastos, et virtutem aestimat annis,
Miraturque nihil, nisi quod Libitina sacravit.
Ennius et sapiens, et fortis, et alter Homerus, 50

COMMENTARY.

"must needs have the advantage of their *old* ones: who "had no knowledge of writing, as an *art*, or, if they "had, took but small care to put it in practice."

Further, this plea of antiquity is as uncertain in its *application*, as it was destitute of all truth and reason in its original *foundation*. For if age only must bear away the palm, what way is there of determining, which writers are *modern*, and which *ancient*? The impossibility of fixing this to the satisfaction of an objector, which is pursued [to v. 50] with much agreeable raillery, makes it evident, that the circumstance of antiquity is absolutely nothing; and that in *estimating the merit* of writers, the real, intrinsic excellence of their writings *themselves* is alone to be regarded.

Thus far the poet's intent was to combat the *general* prejudice of the critic,

*Qui redit in fastos et virtutem aestimat annis.*

Taking the fact for granted "of his strong prepossession for antiquity, *as such*" he would discredit, both by raillery and argument, so absurd a conduct. What he gains, by this disposition, is to come to the *particulars* of his charge with more advantage. For the popular

Ut critici dicunt, leviter curare videtur
Quo promissa cadant, et somnia Pythagorea.
Naevius in manibus non est, et mentibus haeret
Pene recens? adeo sanctum est vetus omne poema.
Ambigitur quotiens, uter utro sit prior; aufert 55
Pacuvius docti famam senis, Accius alti:
Dicitur Afranî toga convenisse Menandro:
Plautus ad exemplar Siculi properare Epicharmi;
Vincere Caecilius gravitate, Terentius arte.
Hos ediscit, et hos arto stipata theatro 60

COMMENTARY.

contempt of modern composition, sheltering itself under a shew of learned admiration of the *ancients*, whose age and reputation had made them truly venerable, and whose genuine merits, in the main, could not be disputed, a direct attack upon their fame, at setting out, without any softening, had disgusted the most *moderate*; whereas this prefatory appeal to common sense, under the cover of general criticism, would even dispose bigotry itself to afford the poet a candid hearing. His accusation then of the public taste comes in, here, very pertinently; and is delivered, with address [from v. 50 to 63] in a particular detail of the judgements passed upon the most celebrated of the old-Roman poets, by the generality of the modern critics; where, to win upon their prejudices still further by his generosity and good faith, he scruples not to recount such of their determinations on the merit of ancient writers, as were reasonable and well founded, as well as others, that he deemed less just, and as such intended more immediately to expose.

Spectat Roma potens; habet hos numeratque poetas
Ad nostrum tempus, Livî Scriptoris ab aevo.
Interdum volgus rectum videt: est ubi peccat.
Si veteres ita miratur laudatque poetas,
Ut nihil anteferat, nihil illis comparet; errat: 65
Si quaedam nimis antique, si pleraque dure
Dicere cedit eos, ignave multa fatetur;
Et sapit, et mecum facit, et Jove judicat aequo.
Non equidem insector, delendave carmina Laevî

COMMENTARY.

We see then with what art the poet conducts himself in this attack on the *ancients*, and how it served his purpose, by turns, to soften and aggravate the *charge*. *First*, "he wanted to lower the reputation of the old poets." This was not to be done by general invective or an affected dissimulation of their just praise. He admits then [from v. 63 to 66] their reasonable pretensions to *admiration*. 'Tis the *degree* of it alone, to which he objects.

*Si veteres* ITA *miratur laudatque*, &c.

*Secondly*, "he wanted to draw off their applauses from "the ancient to the modern poets." This required the *advantages* of those moderns to be distinctly shewn, or, which comes to the same, the *comparative deficiencies* of the ancients to be pointed out. These were not to be dissembled, and are, as he openly insists [to v. 69] *obsolete language, rude and barbarous construction*, and *slovenly composition*,

*Si quaedam nimis* ANTIQUE, *si pleraque* DURE,
*Dicere cedit eos,* IGNAVE *multa.*

Esse reor, memini quae plagosum mihi parvo 70
Orbilium dictare; sed emendata videri
Pulchraque, et exactis minimum distantia, miror:
Inter quae verbum emicuit si forte decorum,
Si versus paulo concinnior unus et alter;
Injuste totum ducit venatque poema. 75
Indignor quicquam reprehendi, non quia crasse
Compositum, inlepideve putetur, sed quia nuper:
Nec veniam antiquis, sed honorem et praemia posci.
Recte necne crocum floresque perambulet Attae

COMMENTARY.

But what then? an objector replies, these were venial faults, surely; the *deficiencies* of the times, and not of the men; who, with such incorrectnesses as are here noted, might still possess the greatest *talents*, and produce the noblest *designs*. This [from v. 69 to 79] is readily admitted. But, in the mean time, one thing was clear, that they were not *finished models—exactis minimum distantia*. Which was the main point in dispute. For the bigot's absurdity lay in this,

*Non veniam antiquis, sed honorem et praemia posci.*

Nay, his folly is shewn to have gone still greater lengths. These boasted models of antiquity, with all their imperfections, had occasionally [v. 73, 74] though the instances were indeed rare and thinly scattered, *striking beauties*. These, under the recommendation of *age*, which, of course, commands our reverence, might well impose on the judgements of the *generality*, and standing forth with advantage, as from a shaded and dark *ground*, would naturally catch the eye and admiration of the more

Fabula, si dubitem; clament periisse pudorem 80
Cuncti pene patres: ea cum reprehendere coner,
Quae gravis Aesopus, quae doctus Roscius egit.
Vel quia nil rectum, nisi quod placuit sibi, ducunt;
Vel quia turpe putant parere minoribus, et, quae
Inberbi didicere, senes perdenda fateri. 85

COMMENTARY.

*learned.* Thus much the poet candidly insinuates in excuse of the bigot's *ill judgment.* But, unluckily, he had cut himself off from the benefit of this plea, by avowedly grounding his *admiration,* not merely on the intrinsic excellence, so far as it went, of the ancient poetry itself; but on the advantage of any extraneous circumstance, which but casually stuck to it. The accident of a play's having passed though the mouth, and been graced by the action, of a just speaker, was sufficient [from v. 79 to 83] (so inexcusable were his prejudices) to attract his wonder, and justify his esteem. In so much that it became an insolence, generally cried out upon, for any one to censure such pieces of the theatre,

*Quae gravis Æsopus, quae doctus Roscius egit.*

This being the case, it was no longer a doubt, whether the affected admiration of antiquity proceeded from a deluded judgment only, or a much worse cause. It could plainly be resolved into no other, than the willful agency of the malignant affections; which, wherever they prevail, corrupt the simple and ingenuous sense of the mind, either 1. [v. 83] *in engendring high conceits of self,* and referring all degrees of excellence to the supposed infallible standard of every man's own judgment; or 2. [to v. 86] *in creating a false shame,* and reluctancy in us

Jam Saliare Numae carmen qui laudat, et illud
Quod mecum ignorat, solus volt scire videri;
Ingeniis non ille favet plauditque sepultis,
Nostra sed inpugnat, nos nostraque lividus odit.
Quod si tam Graiis novitas invisa fuisset, 90

COMMENTARY.

to be directed by the judgments of others, though *seen* to be more equitable, whenever they are found in opposition to our own rooted and preconceived opinions. The bigotry of *old Men* is, especially, for this reason, invincible. They hold themselves upbraided by the sharper sight of their juniors; and regard the adoption of new sentiments, at their years, as so much absolute loss on the side of the dead stock of their old literary possessions. These considerations are generally of such prevalency in great veteran critics, that [from v. 86 to 90] whenever, as in the case before us, they pretend an uncommon zeal for antiquity, and their sagacity piques itself on detecting the superior value of obscure rhapsodists whom no body else reads, or is able to understand, we may be sure the secret view of such, is, not the generous defence and patronage of *ancient* wit, but a low malevolent pleasure in decrying the just pretensions of the *modern*.

*Ingeniis non ille favet plauditque sepultis,*
*Nostra sed impugnat, nos nostraque lividus odit.*

The poet had, now, made appear the unreasonable attachment of his countrymen to the fame of their old writers. He had throughly unravelled the sophistical pretences, on which it affected to justify itself; and had even dared to unveil the *secret iniquitous principle*, from

Quam nobis; quid nunc esset vetus? aut quid haberet,
Quod legeret tereretque viritim publicus usus?
Ut primum positis nugari Graecia bellis
Coepit, et in vitium fortuna labier aequa;

COMMENTARY.

which it arose. It was now time to look forward to the *effects* of it; which were, in truth, very baleful; its poisonous influences being of force to corrupt and wither, as it were, in the bud, every rising species of excellence, and fatally to check the very hopes and tendencies of true genius. Nothing can be truer, than this remark; which he further enforces, and brings home to his adversaries, by asking a pertinent question, to which it concerned them to make a serious reply. They had magnified v. 28 the perfection of the Greek models. But what [to v. 93] if the Greeks had conceived the same aversion to *novelties*, as the Romans? How then could *those* models have ever been furnished to the public use? The question, we see, insinuates what was before affirmed to be the truth of the case; that the unrivalled excellence of the Greek poets proceeded only from long and vigorous exercise, and a painful uninterrupted application to the arts of verse. The liberal spirit of that people led them to countenance every new attempt towards superior literary excellence; and so, by the public favour, their writings, from rude essays, became at length the standard and admiration of succeeding wits. The Romans had treated their adventurers quite otherwise, and the effect was answerable. This is the purport of what to a common eye may look like a *digression* [from v. 93 to 108], in which is deline-

Nunc athletarum studiis, nunc arsit equorum: 95
Marmoris, aut eboris fabros, aut aeris amavit;
Suspendit picta vultum mentemque tabella;
Nunc tibicinibus, nunc est gavisa tragoedis:
Sub nutrice puella velut si luderet infans,
Quod cupide petiit, mature plena reliquit. 100
Quid placet, aut odio est, quod non mutabile credas?
Hoc paces habuere bonae, ventique secundi.

COMMENTARY.

ated the very different genius and practice of the two nations. For the *Greeks* [to v. 102] had applied themselves, in the intervals of their leisure from the toils of war, to the cultivation of every species of elegance, whether in *arts*, or *letters*; and loved to cherish the public emulation, by affording a free indulgence to the various and volatile disposition of the times. The activity of these restless spirits, was incessantly attempting some new and untryed *form* of composition; and, when *that* was brought to a due degree of perfection, it turned, *in good time*, to the cultivation of some *other*.

*Quod cupide petiit, mature plena reliquit.*

So that the very caprice of *humour* [v. 101] assisted, in this libertine country, to advance and help forward the public taste. Such was the effect of *peace and opportunity* with them.

*Hoc paces habuere bonae ventique secundi.*

Whereas the *Romans* [to v. 108] by a more composed temperament and saturnine complexion had devoted their pains to the pursuit of domestic utilities, and a more dexterous management of the *arts of gain*. The conse-

Romae dulce diu fuit et sollenne, reclusa
Mane domo vigilare, clienti promere iura:
Scriptos nominibus rectis expendere nummos: 105
Majores audire, minori dicere, per quae
Crescere res posset, minui damnosa libido.
Mutavit mentem populus levis, et calet uno
Scribendi studio: puerique patresque severi 109
Fronde comas vincti coenant, et carmina dictant.
Ipse ego, qui nullos me adfirmo scribere versus,
Invenior Parthis mendacior; et prius orto
Sole vigil, calamum et chartas et scrinia posco.

COMMENTARY.

quence of which was, that when [to v. 117] by the decay of the old frugal spirit, the necessary effect of overflowing plenty and ease, they began, at length, to seek out for the elegancies of life; and *a fit of versifying*, the first of all liberal amusements, that usually seizes an idle people, had come upon them; their ignorance of rules, and want of exercise in the art of writing, rendered them wholly unfit to succeed in it. So that their aukward attempts in poetry were now as disgraceful to their *taste*, as their total disregard of it, before, had been to their *civility*. The root of this mischief was the idolatrous regard paid to their ancient poets: which unluckily, when the public emulation was set a going, not only checked its progress, but gave it a wrong bias; and, instead of helping true genius to outstrip the lame and tardy endeavours of ancient wit, drew it aside into a vicious and unprofitable mimicry of its very imperfections. Whence it had come to pass, that, whereas in other *arts*, the previous knowledge of rules is required to the

Navem agere ignarus navis timet: abrotonum aegro
Non audet, nisi qui didicit, dare: quod medicorum est, 115
Promittunt medici: tractant fabrilia fabri:
Scribimus indocti doctique poemata passim.
Hic error tamen et levis haec insania quantas
Virtutes habeat, sic collige: vatis avarus
Non temere est animus: versus amat, hoc studet unum; 120
Detrimenta, fugas servorum, incendia ridet:

COMMENTARY.

practice of them, in this of *versifying*, no such qualification was deemed necessary.

*Scribimus indocti doctique poemata passim.*

This mischance was *doubly* fatal to the Latin poetry. For the ill success of these blind adventurers had increased the original mischief, by confirming, as it needs must, the superstitious reverence of the old writers; and insensibly brought, as well the art itself, as the modern professors of it, into disrepute with the discerning public. The vindication of *both*, then, at this critical juncture, was become highly seasonable; and to this, which was the poet's main purpose, he addresses himself through the remainder of the epistle.

118 to the end. HIC ERROR TAMEN, &c.] Having sufficiently obviated the popular and reigning prejudices against the modern poets, his office of *advocate* for their fame, which he had undertaken, and was now to discharge, in form, required him to set their real merits and pretensions in a just light. He enters therefore

Non fraudem socio, puerove incogitat ullam
Pupillo: vivit siliquis, et pane secundo:
Militiae quanquam piger et malus, utilis urbi;
Si das hoc, parvis quoque rebus magna juvari; 125
Os tenerum pueri balbumque poëta figurat:
Torquet ab obscoenis jam nunc sermonibus aurem;
Mox etiam pectus praeceptis format amicis,
Asperitatis et invidiae corrector et irae:
Recte facta refert; orientia tempora notis 130
Instruit exemplis; inopem solatur et aegrum.
Castis cum pueris ignara puella mariti
Disceret unde preces, vatem ni Musa dedisset?

COMMENTARY.

immediately on this task. And, in drawing the character of the *true poet*, endeavours to impress the Emperor with as advantageous an idea as possible, of the worth and dignity of his calling. And this, not in the fierce insulting tone of a zealot for the *honour of his order*, which to the *great* is always disgusting, and where the occasion is, confessedly, not of the last importance, plainly absurd; but with that unpretending air of insinuation, which good sense, improved by a thorough knowledge of the world, teaches: with that seeming indifference which disarms prejudice: in a word, with that gracious *smile in his aspect*, which his strong admirer and faint copyer, Persius, so justly noted in him, and which convinces almost without the help of argument; or to say it more truly, *persuades* where it doth not properly *convince*. In this disposition he sets out on his defence; and yet omits no *particular*, which could any way serve to the real recommendation of *poets*, or which

Poscit opem chorus, et praesentia numina sentit;
Coelestis implorat aquas, docta prece blandus; 135
Avertit morbos, metuenda pericula pellit;
Inpetrat et pacem, et locupletem frugibus annum:
Carmine Dî superi placantur, carmi e Manes.
Agricolae prisci, fortes, parvoque beati,
Condita post frumenta, levantes tempore festo 140
Corpus et ipsum animum spe finis dura ferentem,
Cum sociis operum pueris et conjuge fida,
Tellurem porco, Silvanum lacte piabant,
Floribus et vino Genium memorem brevis aevi.
Fescennina per hunc invecta licentia morem 145

COMMENTARY.

indeed, the gravest or warmest of their friends have ever pleaded in their behalf. This defence consists [from v. 118 to 139] in bringing into view their many *civil*, *moral*, and *religious* virtues. For the muse, as the poet contends (and nothing could be more likely to conciliate the esteem of the politic emperor) administers, in this threefold capacity, to the service of the state.

But *Religion*, which was its *noblest end*, was, besides, the *first object* of poetry. The dramatic muse, in particular, had her birth, and derived her very character, from it. This circumstance then leads him with advantage, to give an historical deduction of the rise and progress of the Latin poesy, from its first rude workings in the days of barbarous superstition, through every successive period of its improvement, down to his own times. Such a view of its descent and gradual reformation was directly to the poet's purpose. For having magnified the virtues of his order, as of such importance to society, the question

Versibus alternis opprobria rustica fudit;
Libertasque recurrentis accepta per annos
Lusit amabiliter: donec jam saevus apertam
In rabiem coepit verti jocus, et per honestas
Ire domos impune minax. doluere cruento 150
Dente lacessiti: fuit intactis quoque cura
Conditione super communi: quin etiam lex
Poenaque lata, malo quae nollet carmine quemquam

COMMENTARY.

naturally occurred, by what unhappy means it had fallen out, that it was, nevertheless, in such low estimation with the public. The answer is, that the state of the Latin poetry, as yet, was very rude and imperfect; and so the public disregard was occasioned, only, by its not having attained to that degree of perfection, of which its *nature* was capable. Many reasons had concurred to keep the Latin poetry in this state, which he proceeds to enumerate. The *first and principal* was [from v. 139 to 164] the little attention paid *to critical learning, and the cultivation of a correct and just spirit of composition.* Which, again, had arisen from the coarse illiberal disposition of the Latin muse, who had been nurtured and brought up under the roof of rural superstition; and this, by an impure mixture of licentious jollity, had so corrupted her very nature, that it was only by slow degrees, and not till the conquest of Greece had imported arts and learning into Italy, that she began to chastise her manners, and assume a juster and more becoming deportment. And still she was but in the condition of a rustic *beauty*, when practising her aukward airs, and making her first ungracious essays towards a *manner*.

Describi. vertere modum, formidine fustis
Ad bene dicendum delectandumque redacti. 155
Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artis
Intulit agresti Latio. sic horridus ille
Defluxit numerus Saturnius, et grave virus
Munditiae pepulere: sed in longum tamen aevum
Manserunt, hodieque manent, vestigia ruris. 160
Serus enim Graecis admovit acumina chartis;
Et post Punica bella quietus quaerere coepit,
Quid Sophocles et Thespis et Aeschylos utile ferrent:

COMMENTARY.

*in longum tamen aevum*
*Manserunt, hodieque manent* vestigia ruris.

Her late acquaintance with the Greek models had, indeed, improved her air, and inspired an inclination to emulate their noblest graces. But how successfully, we are given to understand from her unequal attempts in the two sublimer species of their poetry, the TRAGIC, AND COMIC DRAMAS.

1. [from v. 160 to 168] *The study of the Greek tragedians* had very naturally, and to good purpose, in the infancy of their taste, disposed the Latin writers to *translation*. Here they stuck long; for their tragedy, even in the Augustan age, was little else; and yet they succeeded but indifferently in it. The bold and animated genius of Rome was, it is readily owned, well suited to this work. And for force of colouring, and a truly tragic elevation, the Roman poets came not behind their great originals. But unfortunately their judgment was unformed, and they were too soon satisfied with their own productions. Strength and fire was all they endeavoured after. And

Tentavit quoque rem, si digne vertere posset:
Et placuit sibi, natura sublimis et acer. 165
Nam spirat tragicum satis, et feliciter audet;
Sed turpem putat inscitus metuitque lituram.
Creditur, ex medio quia res arcessit, habere
Sudoris minimum; sed habet Comoedia tanto
Plus oneris, quanto veniae minus. aspice, Plautus
Quo pacto partis tutetur amantis ephebi; 171
Ut patris attenti, lenonis ut insidiosi:

COMMENTARY.

with this praise they sate down perfectly contented. The discipline of correction, the curious polishing of art, which had given such a lustre to the Greek tragedians, they knew nothing of; or, to speak their case more truly, they held disgraceful to the high spirit and energy of the Roman genius:

TURPEM PUTAT IN SCRIPTIS METUITQUE LITURAM.

2. It did not fare better with them [from v. 168 to 175] in their attempts to rival *the Greek comedy*. They preposterously set out with the notion of its being easier to execute this drama than the tragic: whereas to hit its genuine character with exactness was, in truth, a point of much more difficulty. As the *subject* of comedy was taken from common life, they supposed an ordinary degree of care might suffice, to do it justice. No wonder then, they overlooked or never came up to that nice adjustment of the *manners*, that truth and decorum of *character*, wherein the glory of comic painting consists, and which none but the quickest eye can discern, and the steddiest hand execute; and, in the room, amused us

Quantus sit Dossennus edacibus in parasitis:
Quam non adstricto percurrat pulpita socco.
Gestit enim nummum in loculos demittere; post hoc
Securus, cadat an recto stet fabula talo. 176
Quem tulit ad scenam ventoso gloria curru,
Exanimat lentus spectator, sedulus inflat.
Sic leve, sic parvum est, animum quod laudis avarum
Subruit ac reficit. valeat res ludicra, si me 180

COMMENTARY.

with *high colouring*, and *false drawing*; with *extravagant, aggravated portraitures*; which, neglecting the modest proportion of real life, are the certain arguments of an unpractised pencil, or vicious taste.

What contributed to this prostitution of the comic muse, was [to v. 177] the seducement of that corruptress of all virtue, *the love of money*; which had thoroughly infected the Roman wits, and was, in fact, the sole object of their pains. Hence, provided they could but catch the applauses of the people, to which the pleasantry of the comic scene more especially aspires, and so secure a good round *price* from the magistrates, whose office it was to furnish this kind of entertainment, they became indifferent to every nobler view and honester purpose. In particular [to v. 182] they so little considered *fame and the praise of good writing*, that they made it the ordinary topic of their ridicule; representing it as the mere illusion of vanity, and the pitiable infirmity of *lean-witted* minds, to be catched by the lure of so empty and unsubstantial a benefit.

Though, were any one, in defiance of public ridicule, so *daring* (as there is no occasion in life, which calls for,

Palma negata macrum, donata reducit opimum.
Saepe, etiam audacem, fugat hoc terretque poetam;
Quod numero plures, virtute et honore minores,
Indocti, stolidique, et depugnare parati 184
Si discordet eques, media inter carmina poscunt
Aut ursum aut pugiles: his nam plebecula gaudet.
Verum equiti quoque jam migravit ab aure voluptas
Omnis, ad ingratos oculos, et gaudia vana.
Quatuor aut pluris aulaea premuntur in horas;

COMMENTARY.

or demonstrates a greater firmness) as frankly to avow and submit himself to this generous *motive*, the surest inspirer of every virtuous excellence, yet one thing remained to check and weaken the vigour of his emulation. This [from v. 182 to 187] was the folly and ill taste of the undiscerning multitude; who, in all countries, have a great share in determining the fate and character of scenical representations, but, from the popular constitution of the government, were, at Rome, of the first consequence. These, by their rude clamours, and the authority of their numbers, were enough to dishearten the most intrepid genius; when, after all his endeavours to reap the glory of an absolute work, the *action* was almost sure to be mangled and broken in upon by the shews of *wild beasts and gladiators*; those *dear delights*, which the Romans, it seems, prized much above the highest pleasures of the drama.

Nay, the poet's case was still more desperate. For it was not the untutored rabble, as in other countries, that gave a countenance to these illiberal sports: even *rank and quality*, at Rome, debased itself in shewing the

Dum fugiunt equitum turmae, peditumque catervae: 190
Mox trahitur manibus regum fortuna retortis:
Esseda festinant, pilenta, petorrita, naves:
Captivum portatur ebur, captiva Corinthus.
Si foret in terris, rideret Democritus; seu

COMMENTARY.

fiercest passion for these *shews*, and was as ready, as abject commonalty itself, to prefer the uninstructing pleasures of the *eye* to those of the *ear*.

EQUITI *quoque jam migravit ab aure voluptas*
*Omnis ad ingratos oculos et gaudia vana.*

And, because this barbarity of taste had contributed more than any thing else to deprave the poetry of the stage, and discourage its best masters from studying its perfection, what follows [from v. 189 to 207] is intended, in all the keenness of raillery, to satyrize this madness. It afforded an ample field for the poet's ridicule. For, besides the riotous disorders of their theatre, the senseless admiration of *pomp and spectacle* in their plays had so inchanted his countrymen, that the very decorations of the scene, the tricks and trappings of the comedians, were surer to catch the applauses of the gaping multitude, than any regard to the justness of the poet's design, or the beauty of his execution.

Here the poet should naturally have concluded his *defence of the dramatic writers*; having alledged every thing in their favour, that could be urged, plausibly, from *the state of the Roman stage: the genius of the people: and the several prevailing practices of ill taste*, which had brought them into disrepute with the best judges. But finding

Diversum confusa genus panthera camelo, 195
Sive elephas albus volgi converterit ora:
Spectaret populum ludis attentius ipsis,
Ut sibi praebentem mimo spectacula plura:
Scriptores autem narrare putaret asello
Fabellam surdo. nam quae pervincere voces 200
Evaluere sonum, referunt quem nostra theatra?
Garganum mugire putes nemus, aut mare Tuscum.
Tanto cum strepitu ludi spectantur, et artes,
Divitiaeque peregrinae: quibus oblitus actor
Cum stetit in scena, concurrit dextera laevae: 205

COMMENTARY.

himself obliged, in the course of this vindication of the modern *stage-poets*, to censure as sharply, as their very enemies, the vices and defects of their *poetry*; and fearing lest this severity on a sort of writing, to which himself had never pretended, might be misinterpreted as the effect of envy only, and a malignant disposition towards the art itself, under cover of pleading for its *professors*, he therefore frankly avows [from v. 208 to 214] his preference of the *dramatic*, to every other species of poetry; declaring the sovereignty of its pathos over the *affections*, and the magic of its illusive scenery on the *Imagination*, to be the highest argument of poetic excellence, the last and noblest exercise of the human genius.

One thing still remained. He had taken upon himself to apologize for the Roman poets, in *general*; as may be seen from the large terms, in which he proposes his subject.

*Hic error tamen et levis haec insania quantas*
*Virtutes habeat, sic collige.*

Dixit adhuc aliquid? nil sane. quid placet ergo?
Lana Tarentino violas imitata veneno.
Ac ne forte putes me, quae facere ipse recusem,
Cum recte tractent alii, laudare maligne:
Ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur 210
Ire poeta; meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
Inritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus inplet,
Ut magus; et modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.
Verum age, et his, qui se lectori credere malunt,
Quam spectatoris fastidia ferre superbi, 215
Curam impende brevem: si munus Apolline dignum

COMMENTARY.

But, after a general encomium on the *office* itself, he confines his defence to the *writers for the stage* only. In conclusion then, he was constrained, by the very purpose of his address, to say a word or two in behalf of the remainder of this neglected family; of those, who, as the poet expresses it, had *rather trust to the equity of the closet, than subject themselves to the caprice and insolence of the theatre.*

Now, as before, in asserting the honour of the stage-poets he every where supposes the emperor's *disgust* to have sprung from the wrong conduct of the poets themselves, and then extenuates the blame of such *conduct*, by considering, still further, the *causes* which gave rise to it; so he prudently observes the like method here. The politeness of his address concedes to Augustus, the just *offence* he had taken to his brother poets; whose honour, however, he contrives to save by softening the *occasions* of it. This is the drift of what follows [from v. 214 to 229] where he pleasantly recounts the several

Vis complere libris; et vatibus addere calcar,
Ut studio majore petant Helicona virentem.
Multa quidem nobis facimus mala saepe poëtae,
(Ut vineta egomet caedam mea) cum tibi librum 220
Sollicito damus, aut fesso: cum laedimur, unum
Si quis amicorum est ausus reprendere versum:
Cum loca jam recitata revolvimus inrevocati:
Cum lamentamur non adparere labores
Nostros, et tenui deducta poemata filo: 225

COMMENTARY.

foibles and indiscretions of the muse; but in a way, that could only dispose the emperor to smile at, or at most, to pity her infirmities, not provoke his serious censure and disesteem. They amount, on the whole, but to certain idlenesses of *vanity*, the almost inseparable attendant of *wit*, as well as *beauty*; and may be forgiven in *each*, as implying a strong *desire* of pleasing, or rather as *qualifying* both to please. One of the most exceptionable of these *vanities* was a fond persuasion, too readily taken up by men of parts and genius, that *preferment is the constant pay of merit*; and that, from the moment their talents become known to the public, distinction and advancement are sure to follow. They believed, in short, they had only to convince the world of their superior abilities, to deserve the favour and countenance of their prince. But fond and presumptuous as these hopes are (continues the poet [from v. 229 to 244] with all the insinuation of a courtier, and yet with a becoming sense of the dignity of his own character) it may deserve a serious consideration, what poets are fit to be entrusted with the glory of princes; what *ministers* are worth retaining

Cum speramus eo rem venturam, ut, simul atque
Carmina rescieris nos fingere, commodus ultro
Arcessas, et egere vetes, et scribere cogas.
Sed tamen est operae pretium cognoscere, qualis
Aedituos habeat belli spectata domique 230
Virtus, indigno non committenda poetae.
Gratus Alexandro regi Magno fuit ille

COMMENTARY.

in the service of an illustrious VIRTUE, whose honours demand to be solemnized with a religious reverence, and should not be left to the profanation of vile, unhallowed hands. And, to support the authority of this remonstrance, he alledges the example of a great Monarch, who had dishonoured himself by a neglect of this care; of ALEXANDER THE GREAT, who, when master of the world, as Augustus now was, perceived, indeed, the importance of gaining a poet to his service; but unluckily chose so ill, that his encomiums (as must ever be the case with a vile panegyrist) but tarnished the native splendor of those virtues, which his office required him to present, in their fullest and fairest glory, to the admiration of the world. In his appointment of *artists*, whose skill is, also, highly serviceable to the fame of princes, he shewed a truer judgment. For he suffered none but an APELLES and a LYSIPPUS to counterfeit the form and fashion of his *person*. But his *taste*, which was thus exact and even *subtile* in what concerned the mechanic execution of the *fine arts*, took up with a CHOERILUS, to transmit an image of his *mind* to future ages; so grosly undiscerning was he in works of poetry, and the liberal *offerings of the muse!*

Choerilos, incultis qui versibus et male natis
Rettulit acceptos, regale nomisma, Philippos.
Sed veluti tractata notam labemque remittunt 235
Atramenta, fere scriptores carmine foedo
Splendida facta linunt. idem rex ille, poëma
Qui tam ridiculum tam care prodigus emit,
Edicto vetuit; ne quis se, praeter Apellen
Pingeret, aut alius Lysippo cuderet aera 240
Fortis Alexandri voltum simulantia. quod si
Judicium subtile videndis artibus illud
Ad libros et ad haec Musarum dona vocares;
Boeotum in crasso jurares aëre natum.
At neque dedecorant tua de se judicia, atque 245

COMMENTARY.

And thus the poet makes a double use of the illjudgment of this imperial critic. For nothing could better demonstrate the importance of *poetry* to the honour of *greatness*, than that this illustrious conqueror, without any particular knowledge or discernment in the *art* itself, should think himself concerned to court its assistance. And, then, what could be more likely to engage the emperor's further protection and love of *poetry*, than the insinuation (which is made with infinite address) that, as he honoured it equally, so he understood its merits much better? For [from v. 245 to 248, where, by a beautiful concurrence, the flattery of his prince falls in with the honester purpose of doing justice to the memory of his friends] it was not the same unintelligent liberality, which had cherished Choerilus, that poured the full stream of Caesar's bounty on such persons, as VARIUS and VIRGIL. And, as if the

Munera, quae multa dantis cum laude tulerunt,
Dilecti tibi Virgilius Variusque poetae:
Nec magis expressi voltus per aënea signa,
Quam per vatis opus mores animique virorum
Clarorum adparent. nec sermones ego mallem 250
Repentis per humum, quam res componere gestas,
Terrarumque situs, et flumina dicere, et arcis
Montibus impositas, et barbara regna, tuisque
Auspiciis totum confecta duella per orbem,
Claustraque custodem pacis cohibentia Janum, 255
Et formidatam Parthis, te principe, Romam:
Si quantum cuperem, possem quoque. sed neque parvum
Carmen majestas recipit tua; nec meus audet
Rem tentare pudor, quam vires ferre recusent.

COMMENTARY.

spirit of these inimitable poets had, at once, seized him, he breaks away in a bolder run of verse [from v. 248 to 250] *to sing the triumphs of an art*, which expressed the *manners and the mind* in fuller and more durable *relief*, than painting or even sculpture had ever been able to give to the external *figure:* And [from v. 250 to the end] *apologizes for himself* in adopting the humbler epistolary *species*, when a warmth of inclination and the unrivaled glories of his prince were continually urging him on to the nobler, *encomiastic* poetry. His excuse, in brief, is taken from the conscious inferiority of his genius, and a tenderness for the fame of the emperor, which is never more disserved than by the officious sedulity of bad poets to do it honour. And with this apology, one while con-

Sedulitas autem stulte, quem diligit, urguet; 260
Praecipue cum se numeris commendat et arte.
Discit enim citius, meminitque libentius illud
Quod quis deridet, quam quod probat et veneratur.
Nil moror officium, quod me gravat: ac neque ficto
In pejus voltu proponi cereus usquam, 265
Nec prave factis decorari versibus opto:
Ne rubeam pingui donatus munere, et una
Cum scriptore meo capsa porrectus operta,
Deferar in vicum vendentem tus et odores,
Et piper, et quicquid chartis amicitur ineptis. 270

COMMENTARY.

descending to the unfeigned humility of a person, sensible of the *kind and measure* of his abilities, and then, again, sustaining itself by a freedom and even familiarity, which real merit knows, on certain occasions, to take without offence, the epistle concludes.

If the general opinion may be trusted, this, which was one of the *last*, is also among the *noblest*, of the great poet's compositions. Perhaps, the reader, who considers it in the plain and simple order, to which the foregoing analysis hath reduced it, may satisfy himself, that this praise hath not been undeservedly bestowed.

# NOTES

ON THE

# EPISTLE TO AUGUSTUS.

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EPISTOLA AD AUGUSTUM.] The epistle to AUGUSTUS is *an apology for the Roman poets.* The epistle to the PISOS, *a criticism on their poetry. This* to Augustus may be therefore considered as a sequel of *that* to the Pisos; and which could not well be omitted; for the author's design of forwarding the study and improvement of the *art of poetry* required him to bespeak the public favour to its *professors.*

But as, *there,* in correcting the abuses of their poetry, he mixes, occasionally, some encomiums on *poets;* so, *here,* in pleading the cause of the poets, we find him interweaving instructions on *poetry.* Which was but according to the writer's *occasions* in each work. For the freedom of his censure on the *art of poetry* was to be softened by some expressions of his good-will towards the poets; and this apology for their *fame* had been too direct and unmanaged, but for the qualifying appearance

of its intending the further benefit of the *art*. The coincidence, then, of the same general *method*, as well as *design*, in the two epistles, made it not improper to give them together, and on the same footing, to the public. Though both the *subject* and *method* of this last are so clear as to make a continued commentary upon it much less wanted.

4. SI LONGO SERMONE MORER TUA TEMPORA, CAESAR.] The poet is thought to begin with apologizing for the *shortness of this epistle*. And yet 'tis one of the longest he ever wrote. How is this inconsistency to be reconciled? "Horace parle "peutêtre ainsi pour ne pas rebuter Auguste, et "pour lui faire connôitre, qu'il auroit fait une lettre, "beaucoup plus longue, s'il avoit suivi son inclina-"tion." This is the best account of the matter we have, hitherto, been able to come at. But the familiar civility of such a compliment, as M. Dacier supposes, though it might be well enough to an *equal*, or, if dressed up in spruce phrases, might make a figure in the *lettres familieres et galantes* of his own nation; yet is surely of a cast, entirely foreign to the Roman gravity, more especially in an address to the emperor of the world. Mr. Pope, perceiving the absurdity of the common interpretation, seems to have read the lines *interrogatively*; which though it saves the sense, and suits the purpose of the English poet very well, yet neither agrees with the language nor serious air of the ori-

ginal. The case, I believe, was this. The genius of epistolary writing demands, that the subject-matter be not abruptly delivered, or hastily obtruded on the person addressed; but, as the law of decorum prescribes (for the rule holds in *writing*, as in *conversation)* be gradually and respectfully introduced to him. This obtains more particularly in applications to the *great*, and on important subjects. But, now, the poet, being to address his prince on a point of no small delicacy, and on which he foresaw he should have occasion to hold him pretty long, prudently contrives to get, as soon as possible, into his subject; and, to that end, hath the art to convert the very transgression of this rule into the justest and most beautiful compliment.

That cautious preparation, which is ordinarily requisite in our approaches to *greatness*, had been, the poet observes, in the present case, highly unseasonable, as the business and interests of the empire must, in the mean time, have stood still and been suspended. By *sermone* then we are to understand, not the *body* of the epistle, but the proeme or *introduction* only. The *body*, as of public concern, might be allowed to engage, at full length, the emperor's attention. But the *introduction*, consisting of *ceremonial* only, the *common good* required him to shorten as much as possible. It was no time for using an insignificant preamble, or, in our English phrase, of making *long speeches*. The reason, too, is founded, not merely in the

elevated rank of the emperor, but in the peculiar diligence and sollicitude, with which, history tells us, he endeavoured to promote, by various ways, the interests of his country. So that the compliment is as *just*, as it is *polite*. It may be further observed, that *sermo* is used in Horace, to signify the ordinary style of conversation [See Sat. i. 3, 65, and iv. 42.] and therefore not improperly denotes the familiarity of the epistolary address, which, in its easy expression, so nearly approaches to it.

13. URIT ENIM FULGORE SUO, QUI PRAEGRAVAT ARTES INFRA SE POSITAS: EXTINCTUS AMABITUR IDEM.] The poet, we may suppose, spoke this from experience. And so might *another* of later date when he complained:

> Unhappy Wit, like most mistaken things,
> Attones not for that envy which it brings.
>
> *Essay on Crit.* v. 494.

Unless it be thought, that, as this was said by him very early in life, it might rather pass for a prediction of his future fortunes. Be this as it will, the sufferings, which *unhappy wit* is conceived to bring on itself from the *envy*, it excites, are, I am apt to think, somewhat aggravated; at least if one may judge from the effects it had on this *Complainant*. That which would be likely to afflict him most, was the *envy* of his friends. But the generosity of these deserves to be recorded. The *wits* took no offence

at his fame, till they found it eclipse their *own*: And his *Philosopher and Guide*, 'tis well known, stuck close to him, till another and brighter star had gotten the ascendant. Or supposing there might be some malice in the case, it is plain there was little mischief. And for this little the poet's creed provides an ample recompence. EXTINCTUS AMABITUR IDEM: not, we may be sure, by *those* he most improved, enlightened, and obliged; but by late impartial posterity; and by ONE at least of his surviving friends, who generously took upon him the patronage of his fame, and who inherits his genius and his virtues.

14. EXTINCTUS AMABITUR IDEM.] *Envy*, says a discerning ancient, *is the vice of those, who are too weak to contend, and too proud to submit: vitium eorum, qui nec cedere volunt, nec possunt contendere*[a]. Which, while it sufficiently exposes the folly and malignity of this hateful passion, secures the honour of human nature; as implying at the same time, that its worst corruptions are not without a mixture of generosity in them. For this false pride in *refusing to submit*, though absurd and mischievous enough, when unsupported by all *ability to contend*, yet discovers such a sense of superior excellence, as shews, how difficult it is for human nature to divest itself of all virtue. Accordingly,

[a] Quinctilian, lib. xi. c. 1.

when the too powerful *splendor* is withdrawn, our natural veneration of it takes place: *Extinctus amabitur idem.* This is the true exposition of the poet's sentiment; which therefore appears just the reverse of what his French interpreter would fix upon him. "La justice, que nous rendons aux grands hommes "après leur mort, ne vient pas de l'AMOUR, que "nous avons pour leur *vertu*, mais de la HAINE, "dont notre cœur est rempli pour ceux, qui ont "pris leur PLACE." An observation, which only becomes the misanthropy of an old cynic virtue, or the selfishness of a modern system of ethics.

15. PRAESENTI TIBI MATUROS, &c. to v. 18.] We are not to wonder at this and the like extravagances of adulation in the Augustan poets. They had ample authority for what they did of this sort. We know, that altars were erected to the Emperor by the command of the Senate; and that he was publicly invoked, as an established, tutelary divinity. But the seeds of the corruption had been sown much earlier. For we find it sprung up, or rather (as of all the ill weeds, which the teeming soil of human depravity throws forth, none is more thriving and grows faster than this of *flattery*) flourishing at its height, in the tyranny of J. CAESAR. Balbus, in a letter to Cicero [Ep. ad Att. l. ix.] *Swears by the health and safety of Caesar: ità, incolumi Caesare, moriar.* And Dio tells us [L. xliv.] that it was, by the express injunction of the Senate, decreed,

even in Caesar's life-time, that the Romans should bind themselves by this oath. The Senate also, as we learn from the same writer, [L. xliii.] upon receiving the news of his defeat of Pompey's sons, caused his statue to be set up, in the temple of Romulus, with this inscription, DEO INVICTO[b].

'Tis true, these and still greater honours had been long paid to the Roman governors in their provinces, by the *abject, slavish Asiatics.* And this, no doubt, facilitated the admission of such idolatries into the capital[c]. But that a people, from the highest notions of an independent republican equality, could so soon be brought to this prostrate adoration of their first *Lord,* is perfectly amazing! In this, they shewed themselves ripe for servitude. Nothing could keep them out of the hands of a master. And one can scarcely read such accounts, as these, without condemning the vain efforts of dying patriotism, which laboured so fruitlesly, may one not almost say, so weakly? to protract the liberty of such a people. Who can, after this, wonder

[b] Θεῷ ἀνικήτῳ ἐπιγράψαντες. Though, to complete the farce, it was with the greatest shyness and reluctance, that the humility of these lords of the universe could permit itself to accept the ensigns of deity, as the court-historians of those times are forward to inform us. An affectation, which was thought to sit so well upon them, that we find it afterwards practised, in the absurdest and most impudent manner, by the worst of their successors.

[c] See a learned and accurate dissertation on the subject in HIST. DE L'ACAD. DES INSCR. &c. tom. i.

at the incense, offered up by a few court-poets? The adulation of Virgil, which has given so much offence, and of Horace, who kept pace with him, was, we see, but the authorized language of the times; presented indeed with address, but without the heightenings and privileged licence of their profession. For, to their credit, it must be owned, that, though in the office of *poets*, they were to comply with the popular voice, and echo it back to the ears of sovereignty; yet, as *men*, they had too much good sense, and too scrupulous a regard to the dignity of their characters, to exaggerate and go beyond it.

It should, in all reason, surprize and disgust us still more, that modern writers have not always shewn themselves so discrete. The grave and learned LIPSIUS was not ashamed, even without the convenient pretext of popular flattery, or poetic *coloring*, in so many words, to make a God of his patron: who though neither King, nor Pope, was yet the next best material for this manufacture, an Archbishop. For, though the critic knew, that it was *not every wood, that will make a Mercury*, yet no body would dispute the fitness of that, which grew so near the altar. In plain words, I am speaking of an Archbishop of MECHLIN, whom, after a deal of fulsome compliment (which was the vice of the man) he exalts at last, with a pagan complaisance, into the order of Deities. "Ad haec, says he, erga omnes "humanitas et facilitas me faciunt, ut omnes te

"non tanquàm hominem aliquem de nostro coetu, "sed tanquam DEUM QUENDAM DE COELO DELAP- "SUM INTUEANTUR ET ADMIRENTUR."

16. JURANDASQUE TUUM PER NUMEN PONIMUS ARAS.] On this idea of the APOTHEOSIS, which was the usual mode of flattery in the Augustan age, but, as having the countenance of public authority, sometimes inartificially enough employed, Virgil hath projected one of the noblest allegories in ancient poetry, and at the same time hath given to it all the force of *just* compliment, the *occasion* itself allowed. *Each* of these excellencies was to be expected from his talents. For, as his genius led him to the *sublime;* so his exquisite judgment would instruct him to palliate this bold fiction, and qualify, as much as possible, the shocking adulation, implied in it. So singular a beauty deserves to be shewn at large.

The *third* GEORGIC sets out with an apology for the low and simple argument of that work, which, yet, the poet esteemed, for its novelty, preferable to the sublimer, but trite, themes of the Greek writers. Not but he intended, on some future occasion, to adorn a nobler subject. This was the great plan of the Aeneïs, which he now *prefigures* and unfolds at large. For, taking advantage of the noblest privilege of his *art*, he breaks away, in a fit of *prophetic* enthusiasm, to foretel his successes in this projected enterprize, and, under the imagery of the ancient *triumph*, which comprehends, or

suggests to the imagination, whatever is most august in human affairs, to delineate the future glories of this ambitious design. The whole conception, as we shall see, is of the utmost grandeur and magnificence; though, according, to the usual management of the poet (which, as not being apprehended by his critics, hath furnished occasion, even to the best of them, to charge him with a want of the *sublime*) he hath contrived to soften and *familiarize* its appearance to the reader, by the artful manner, in which it is introduced. It stands thus:

*tentanda via est, qua me quoque possim*
*Tollere humo,* VICTORQUE *virûm volitare per ora.*

This idea of *victory*, thus casually dropped, he makes the basis of his imagery; which, by means of this gradual preparation, offers itself easily to the apprehension, though it thereby loses, as the poet designed it should, much of that broad *glare*, in which writers of less judgment love to shew their ideas, as tending to set the common reader at a gaze. The allegory then proceeds:

*Primus ego patriam mecum (modo vita supersit)*
*Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas.*

The projected conquest was no less than that of all the *Grecian Muses* at once; whom, to carry on the decorum of the allegory, he threatens, 1. to force from their high and advantageous situation on the summit of the *Aonian mount*; and, 2. bring *captive* with him into Italy: the *former* circumstance

intimating to us the difficulty and danger of the enterprize; and the *latter*, his complete execution of it.

The *palmy*, triumphal entry, which was usual to victors on their return from foreign successes, follows:

*Primus Idumaeas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas.*

But ancient conquerors did not hold it sufficient to reap this transient fruit of their labours. They were ambitious to consecrate their glory to immortality, by a *temple*, or other public monument, which was to be built out of the spoils of the conquered cities or countries. This the reader sees is suitable to the idea of the great work proposed; which was, out of the old remains of Grecian art, to compose a *new* one, that should comprize the virtues of them all: as, in fact, the Aeneïd is known to unite in itself whatever is most excellent, not in Homer only, but, universally, in the wits of Greece. The everlasting monument of the *marble* temple is then reared:

*Et viridi in campo templum de* MARMORE *ponam.*

And, because ancient superstition usually preferred, for these purposes, the banks of *rivers* to other situations, therefore the poet, in beautiful allusion to the site of some of the most celebrated pagan temples, builds *his* on the MINCIUS. We see with what a scrupulous propriety the allusion is carried on.

*Propter aquam, tardis ingens ubi flexibus errat*
MINCIUS, *et tenera praetexit arundine ripas.*

Next, this temple was to be dedicated, as a monument of the victor's *piety*, as well as glory, to some propitious, tutelary deity, under whose auspices the great adventure had been atchieved. The *dedication* is then made to the poet's *divinity*, Augustus:

*In medio mihi* CAESAR *erit, templumque tenebit.*

TEMPLUM TENEBIT. The expression is emphatical; as intimating to us, and prefiguring the secret purpose of the Aeneïs, which was, in the person of Aeneas, to shadow forth and consecrate the character of Augustus. His divinity was to fill and *occupy* that great work. And the ample circuit of the epic plan was projected only, as a more awful enclosure of that august presence, which was to *inhabit* and solemnize the vast round of this poetic building.

And now the wonderful address of the poet's artifice appears. The mad servility of his country had *deified* the emperor in good earnest: and his brother poets made no scruple to *worship* in his temples, and to come before him with handfuls of *real* incense, smoking from the altars. But the sobriety of Virgil's adoration was of another cast. He seizes this circumstance only to *embody* a poetical fiction; which, on the supposition of an actual *deification*, hath all the force of compliment, which the *fact* implies, and yet, as presented through the chast veil of allegory, eludes the offence, which the *naked* recital must needs have given to sober and reasonable men. Had the emperor's *popular* divinity been

flatly acknowledged, and adored, the praise, even under Virgil's management, had been insufferable for its extravagance; and, without some support for his poetical *numen* to rest upon, the figure had been more forced and strained, than the rules of just writing allow. As it is, the historical truth of his *apotheosis* authorizes and supports the *fiction*, and the fiction, in its turn, serves to refine and palliate the *history*.

The Aeneïs being, by the poet's improvement of this circumstance, thus naturally predicted under the image of a *temple*, we may expect to find a close and studied analogy betwixt them. The great, component parts of the *one* will, no doubt, be made, very faithfully, to represent and adumbrate those of the *other*. This hath been executed with great art and diligence.

1. The *temple*, we observed, was erected on the banks of a river. This site was not only proper, for the reason already mentioned, but also, for the further convenience of instituting *public games*, the ordinary attendants of the *consecration* of temples. These were generally, as in the case of the Olympic and others, celebrated on the banks of rivers.

*Illi victor ego, et Tyrio conspectus in ostro,*
*Centum quadrijugos agitabo ad flumina currus.*
*Cuncta mihi, Alpheum linquens lucosque Molorchi,*
*Cursibus et crudo decernet Graecia caestu.*

To see the propriety of the *figure* in this place, the reader needs only be reminded of the *book of games* in the Aeneïd, which was purposely introduced in

honour of the Emperor, and not, as is common l thought, for a mere trial of skill between the poet and his master. The emperor was passionately fond of these sports, and was even the author, or restorer, of *one* of them. It is not to be doubted, that he alludes also to the *quinquennial games*, actually celebrated, in honour of his temples, through many parts of the empire. And this the poet undertakes in the *civil* office of VICTOR.

2. What follows is in the *religious* office of PRIEST. For it is to be noted, that, in assuming this double character, which the decorum of the solemnities, here recounted, prescribed, the poet has an eye to the *political* design of the Aeneïs, which was to do honour to Caesar, in either capacity of a *civil* and *religious* personage; both being essential to the idea of the PERFECT LEGISLATOR, whose office and character (as an eminent critic hath lately shewn us[d]) it was his purpose, in this immortal work, to adorn and recommend. The account of his *sacerdotal functions* is delivered in these words:

*Ipse caput tonsae foliis ornatus olivae*
*Dona feram. Jam, nunc solemnes ducere pompas*
*Ad delubra juvat, caesosque videre juvencos;*
*Vel scena ut versis discedat frontibus, utque*
*Purpurea intexti tollant aulaea Britanni.*

The imagery in this place cannot be understood, without reflecting on the customary form and dispo-

d DIV. LEG. vol. i. B. ii. S. 4.

sition of the pagan temples. DELUBRUM, or DELUBRA, for either *number* is used indifferently, denotes the shrine, or sanctuary, wherein the statue of the presiding God was placed. This was in the center of the building. Exactly before the *delubrum*, and at no great distance from it, was the ALTAR. Further, the shrine, or *delubrum*, was inclosed and shut up on all sides by *doors* of curious carved-work, and ductile *veils*, embellished by the rich embroidery of *flowers*, *animals*, or *human figures*. This being observed, the progress of the imagery before us will be this. The procession *ad delubra*, or shrine: the sacrifice on the *altars*, erected before it: and lastly, the painted, or rather wrought *scenery* of the purple *veils*, inclosing the image, which were ornamented, and seemed to be sustained or held up by the figures of *inwoven Britons*. The meaning of all which, is, that the poet would proceed to the celebration of Caesar's praise in all the gradual, solemn preparation of poetic pomp: that he would render the most grateful *offerings* to his divinity in those occasional *episodes*, which he should consecrate to his more immediate honour: and, finally, that he would provide the richest texture of his fancy, for a covering to that admired *image* of his virtues, which was to make the sovereign pride and glory of his poem. The choice of the *inwoven Britons*, for the support of his *veil*, is well accounted for by those, who tell us, that Augustus was proud to have a number of these to serve about him in quality of slaves.

The ornaments of the DOORS of this *delubrum*, on which the sculptor used to lavish all the riches of his *art*, are next delineated.

*In foribus pugnam ex auro solidoque elephanto*
*Gangaridum faciam, victorisque arma Quirini;*
*Atque hic undantem bello, magnumque fluentem*
*Nilum, ac navali surgentes aere columnas.*
*Addam urbes Asiae domitas, pulsumque Niphatem,*
*Fidentemque fugâ Parthum versisque sagittis;*
*Et duo rapta manu diverso ex hoste trophaea,*
*Bisque triumphatas utroque ex littore gentes.*

Here the covering of the *figure* is too thin to hide the *literal* meaning from the commonest reader, who sees, that the several triumphs of Caesar, here recorded in *sculpture*, are those, which the poet hath taken most pains to *finish*, and hath occasionally inserted, as it were, in *miniature*, in several places of his *poem*. Let him only turn to the prophetic speech of Anchises' shade in the VI^th^, and to the description of the shield in the VIII^th^ book.

Hitherto we have contemplated the decorations of the *shrine*, i. e. such as bear a more direct and immediate reference to the honour of Caesar. We are now presented with a view of the remoter, surrounding ornaments of the temple. These are the illustrious Trojan chiefs, whose story was to furnish the materials, or, more properly, to form the body and *case*, as it were, of his august structure. They are also connected with the idol deity of the place by the closest ties of relationship, the Julian family

affecting to derive its pedigree from this proud original. The poet then, in his arrangement of these additional figures, with admirable judgment, completes and rounds the entire fiction.

*Stabunt et Parii lapides, spirantia signa,*
*Assaraci proles, demissaeque ab Jove gentis*
*Nomina: Trosque parens et Trojae Cynthius auctor.*

Nothing now remains but for *fame* to eternize the glories of what the great architect had, at the expence of so much art and labour, completed; which is predicted in the highest sublime of ancient poetry, under the idea of ENVY, whom the poet personalizes, shuddering at the view of such transcendent perfection; and tasting, beforehand, the pains of a remediless vexation, strongly pictured in the image of the worst, infernal tortures.

INVIDIA *infelix furias amnemque severum*
*Cocyti metuet, tortosque Ixionis angues,*
*Immanemque rotam, et non exuperabile saxum.*

Thus have I presumed, but with a religious awe, to inspect and declare the mysteries of this ideal temple. The attempt after all might have been censured, as prophane, if the great *Mystagogue* himself, or some body for him *, had not given us

* In these lines,
*Mox tamen ardentes accingar dicere pugnas*
*Caesaris, et nomen famâ tot ferre per annos,*
*Tithoni primâ quot abest ab origine Caesar.*
Which I suspect not to have been from the hand of Virgil. And,

the undoubted key to it. Under this encouragement I could not withstand the temptation of disclosiug thus much of one of the noblest fictions of antiquity;

I. On account of some *peculiarities in the expression.*

1. *Accingar* is of frequent use in the best authors, to denote *a readiness and resolution to do any thing*; but as joined with an *infinitive mood, accingar dicere,* I do not remember to have ever seen it. 'Tis often used by Virgil, but, if the several places be consulted, it will always be found with an *accusative* and *preposition*, expressed, or understood, as *magicas accingier artes,* or with an *accusative* and *dative,* as *accingere se praedae,* or lastly, with an *ablative,* expressing the *instrument,* as *accingor ferro.* La Cerda, in his notes upon the place, seemed sensible of the objection, and therefore wrote, *Graeca locutio:* the common, but paltry, shift of learned critics, when they determine, at any rate, to support an ancient reading.

2. *Ardentes pugnas, burning battles,* sounds well enough to a modern ear, but I much doubt, if it would have passed in the times of Virgil. At least, I recollect no such expression in all his works; *ardens* being constantly joined to a word, denoting a *substance* of apparent *light, heat,* or *flame,* to which the allusion is easy, as *ardentes gladios, ardentes oculos, campos armis sublimibus ardentes,* and, by an easy metaphor, *ardentes hostes,* but no where, that I can find, to so *abstract* a notion, as that of *fight.* It seems to be to avoid this difficulty, that some have chosen to read *ardentis,* in the *genitive,* which yet Servius rejects as of no authority.

3. But the most glaring note of illegitimacy is in the line,

*Tithoni primâ quot abest ab origine Caesar.*

It has puzzled all the commentators from old Servius down to the learned Mr. Martyn, to give any tolerable account of the poet's choice of *Tithonus,* from whom to derive the ancestry of Augustus, rather than *Anchises,* or *Assaracus,* who were not only more fa-

and the rather, as the propriety of allegoric composition, which made the distinguished pride of ancient poetry, seems but little known or attended to by the *modern* professors of this fine art.

mous, but in the *direct* line. The pretences of any or all of them are too frivolous to make it necessary to spend a thought about them. The instance stands single in antiquity: much less is there any thing like it to be found in the Augustan poets.

II. But the *phraseology* of these lines is the least of my objection. Were it ever so accurate, there is besides, on the first view, a manifest absurdity in the *subject-matter* of them. For would any writer, of but common skill in the art of composition, close a long and elaborate allegory, the principal grace of which consists in its very mystery, with a cold, and formal explanation of it? Or would he pay so poor a compliment to his patron, as to suppose his sagacity wanted the assistance of this additional triplet to lead him into the true meaning? Nothing can be more abhorrent from the usual address and artifice of Virgil's manner. Or,

III. Were the *subject-matter* itself passable, yet, how, in defiance of all the laws of *disposition*, came it to be *forced* in here? Let the reader turn to the passage, and he will soon perceive, that this could never be the *place* for it. The allegory being concluded, the poet returns to his subject, which is proposed in the six following lines:

*Interea Dryadum sylvas, saltusque sequamur*
*Intactos, tua, Maecenas, haud mollia jussa;*
*Te sine nil altum mens inchoat: en age segnes*
*Rumpe moras; vocat ingenti clamore Cithaeron,*
*Taygetique canes, domitrixque Epidaurus equorum,*
*Et vox assensu nemorum ingeminata remugit.*

Would now any one expect, that the poet, after having conducted the reader, thus respectfully, to the very threshold of

17. NIL ORITURUM ALIAS, NIL ORTUM TALE FATENTES.] *Il n'est impossible*, says M. DE BALZAC, in that puffed, declamatory rhapsody, intitled, LE

his subject, should immediately run away again to the point, from which he had set out, and this on so needless an errand, as the letting him into the secret of his allegory?

But this inserted triplet agrees as ill with what *follows*, as with what *precedes* it. For how abrupt is the transition, and unlike the delicate connexion, so studiously contrived by the Augustan poets, from

*Tithoni primâ quot abest ab origine Caesar.*

to

*Seu quis Olympiacae miratus praemia palmae, &c.*

When omit but these interpolated lines, and see how gracefully, and by how natural a succession of ideas, the poet slides into the main of his subject.—

*Interea Dryadum sylvas saltusque sequamur*
*Intactos—*
*Te sine nil—*
*Rumpe moras: vocat ingenti clamore Cithaeron*
*Taygetique canes, domitrixque Epidaurus* EQUORUM,
*Et vox assensu nemorum ingeminata* REMUGIT.
*Seu quis Olympiacae miratus praemia palmae*
*Pascit* EQUOS; *seu quis fortes ad aratra* JUVENCOS.

On the whole, I have not the least doubt, that the lines before us are the spurious offspring of some *later poet*; if indeed the writer of them deserve that name; for, whoever he was, he is so far from partaking of the original spirit of Virgil, that, at most he appears to have been but a servile and paltry mimic of Ovid; from the opening of whose Metamorphosis the design was clearly taken. The turn of the thought is evidently the same in both, and even the *expression*. *Mutatas dicere formas* is echoed by *ardentes dicere pugnas: dicere fert animus*, is, by an affected improvement, *accingar dicere*; and *Tithoni primâ ab origine* is

PRINCE, *de resister au mouvement interieur, qui me pousse. Je ne sçaurois m'empecher de parler du* ROY, *et de sa vertu; de crier à tous les princes, que c'est l'exemple, qu'ils doivent suivre*; DE DEMANDER A TOUS LES PEUPLES, ET A TOUS LES AGES, S'ILS ONT JAMAIS RIEN VEU DE SEMBLABLE. This was spoken of a king of France, who, it will be owned, had his virtues. But they were the virtues of the *man*, and not of the *Prince*. This, however, was a distinction, which the eloquent encomiast was not aware of, or, to speak more truly, his business required him to overlook. For the whole elogy is worth perusing, as it affords a striking proof of the uniform genius of flattery, which, alike under all circumstances, and indifferent to all characters, can hold the same language of the weakest, as the ablest of princes, of LOUIS LE JUSTE, and CAESAR OCTAVIANUS AUGUSTUS.

almost literally the same as *primâque ab origine mundi*. For the *insertion* of these lines in this place, I leave it to the curious to conjecture of it, as they may: but in the mean time, must esteem the office of the true *critic* to be so far resembling that of the *poet* himself, as, within some proper limitations, to justify the *honest* liberty here taken.

*Cum tabulis animum censoris sumet honesti;*
*Audebit quaecunque parum splendoris habebunt*
*Et sine pondere erunt, et honore indigna feruntur,*
VERBA MOVERE LOCO; QUAMVIS INVITA RECEDANT,
ET VERSENTUR ADHUC INTRA PENETRALIA VESTAE.

[2 Ep. ii. 110.

23. SIC FAUTOR VETERUM, &c. to v. 28.] The folly, here satyrized, is common enough in all countries, and extends to all arts. It was just the same preposterous affectation of venerating antiquity, which put the connoisseurs in *painting*, under the emperors, on crying up the simple and rude sketches of AGLAOPHON and POLYGNOTUS, above the exquisite and finished pictures of PARRHASIUS and ZEUXIS. The account is given by Quintilian, who in his censure of this absurdity, points to the undoubted source of it. His words are these: "Primi, quorum "quidem opera non vetustatis modò gratiâ visenda "sunt, clari pictores fuisse dicuntur Polygnotus et "Aglaophon; quorum simplex color tam sui stu-"diosos adhuc habet, ut illa propè rudia ac velut "futurae mox artis primordia, maximis, qui post "eos extiterunt, auctoribus praeferantur, PROPRIO "QUODAM INTELLIGENDI (ut mea fert opinio) AM-"BITU." [L. xii. c. 10.] The lover of painting must be the more surprized at this strange *preference*, when he is told, that Aglaophon, at least, had the use of only *one single colour*: whereas Parrhasius and Zeuxis, who are amongst the *maximi autores*, here glanced at, not only employed *different colours*, but were exceedingly eminent, the one of them for *correct drawing, and the delicacy of his outline*; the *other*, for his *invention* of that great secret of the *chiaro oscuro*. "Post Zeuxis et Parrhasius: quorum "prior LUMINUM UMBRARUMQUE INVENISSE RA-

"TIONEM, secundus, EXAMINASSE SUBTILIUS LINEAS "DICITUR." [Ibid.]

28. SI, QUIA GRAIORUM SUNT ANTIQUISSIMA QUAEQUE SCRIPTA vel OPTIMA, &c.] The common interpretation of this place supposes the poet to admit *the most ancient of the Greek writings to be the best*. Which were, even contrary to all experience and common sense, and is directly confuted by the history of the Greek learning. What he allows is, the *superiority* of the oldest Geeek writings *extant*; which is a very different thing. The turn of his argument confines us to this sense. For he would shew the folly of concluding the same of the *old Roman* writers, on their *first* rude attempts to copy the finished models of Greece, as of the *old Greek writers* themselves, who were furnished with the means of producing those *models* by long discipline and cultivation. This appears, certainly, from what follows:

*Venimus ad summum fortunae : pingimus atque*
*Psallimus et luctamur Achivis doctius unctis.*

The design of which hath been entirely overlooked. For it hath been taken only for a *general expression* of falsehood and absurdity, of just the same import, as the proverbial line,

*Nil intra est oleâ, nil extra est in nuce duri.*

Whereas it was *designedly* pitched upon to convey a *particular illustration* of the very absurdity in

For the rest, he every where discovers a candid and just esteem of their earlier writers; as may be seen from many places in this very epistle; but more especially from that severe censure in 1 S. x. 17. (which hath more of acrimony in it, than he usually allows to his satyr) when, in speaking of the writers of the old comedy, he adds,

*Quos neque pulcher*
*Hermogenes unquam legit, neque simius iste*
*Nil praeter Calvum et doctus cantare Catullum.*

With all his zeal for correct writing, he was not, we see, of the humour of that delicate sort, who are for burning their old poets; and, to be well with women and court critics, confine their reading and admiration to the innocent sing-song of some soft and fashionable rhymer, whose utter insipidity is a thousand times more insufferable, than any barbarism.

56. PACUVIUS DOCTI FAMAM SENIS, ACCIUS ALTI:] The epithet *doctus*, here applied to the tragic poet, *Pacuvius*, is, I believe, sometimes misunderstood, though the opposition to *altus* clearly determines the sense. For, as this last word expresses the *sublime* of sentiment and expression, which comes from *nature*, so the former word must needs be interpreted of that *exactness* in both, or at least of that *skill* in the conduct of the scene (the proper *learning* of a dramatic poet) which is the result of *art*.

The Latin word *doctus* is indeed somewhat ambiguous: but we are chiefly misled by the English word, *learned*, by which we translate it, and by

which, in general use, is meant, rather extensive reading, and what we call *erudition*, than a profound skill in the rules and principles of any art. But this last is frequently the sense of the Latin term *doctus*, as we may see from its application, in the best classic writers, to other, besides the literary professions. Thus, to omit other instances, we find it applied very often in Horace himself. It is applied to a *singing-girl*—*doctae* psallere Chiae—in one of his Odes, l. iv. 13. It is applied to several *mechanic arts* in this epistle—" *doctius* Achivis pingimus "atque psallimus et luctamur:" It is even applied, *absolutely*, to the player Roscius — *doctus* Roscius, in v. 82, where his skill in *acting* could only be intended by it. It is, also, in this sense, that he calls his imitator, *doctus*, i. e. skilled and knowing in his art, A. P. v. 319. Nay, it is precisely in this sense that Quinctilian uses the word, when he characterizes this very Pacuvius—*Pacuvium videri* doctiorem, *qui esse docti affectant, volunt* [l. x. c. 1.] i. e. *they, who affect to be thought knowing in the rules of dramatic writing, give this praise to Pacuvius.* The expression is so put, as if Quinctilian intended a censure of these critics; because this pretence to dramatic art, and the strict imitation of the Greek poets, was grown, in his time, and long before it, into a degree of pedantry and *affectation*; no other merit but this of *docti*, being of any significancy, in their account. There is no reason to think that Quinctilian meant to insinuate the poet's

want of this merit, or his own contempt of it: though he might think, and with reason, that too much stress had been laid upon it by some men.

It is in the same manner that one of our own poets has been characterized; and the application of this term to him will shew the force of it, still more clearly.

In Mr. Pope's fine imitation of this epistle, are these lines—

In all debates, where critics bear a part,
Not one but nods, and talks of Jonson's *art*—

One sees, then, how Mr. Pope understood the *docti*, of Horace. But our Milton applies the word *learned* itself, and in the Latin sense of it, to Jonson—

When Jonson's *learned* sock is on—

For what is this *learning*? Indisputably, his *dramatic learning*, his skill in the scene, and his observance of the ancient rules and practice. For, though Jonson was indeed *learned*, in every sense, it is the learning of his profession, as a comic artist, for which he is here celebrated.

The Latin substantive, *doctrina*, is used with the same latitude, as the adjective, *doctus*. It sometimes signifies the *peculiar sort* of learning, under consideration; though sometimes again it signifies *learning*, or erudition, at large. It is used in the *former* sense by Cicero, when he observes of the satires of Lucilius, that they were remarkable for their wit and

pleasantry, not for their *learning*—*doctrina* mediocris. So that there is no contradiction in this judgment, as is commonly thought, to that of Quinctilian, who declares roundly—*eruditio* in eo mira—For, though *doctrina* and *eruditio* be sometimes convertible terms, they are not so here. The *learning* Cicero speaks of in Lucilius, as being but *moderate*, is his learning, or skill in the art of writing and composition.—That this was the whole purport of Cicero's observation, any one may see by turning to the place where it occurs, in the proeme to his first book DE FINIBUS.

59. VINCERE CAECILIUS GRAVITATE, TERENTIUS ARTE.] It should be observed, that the judgment, here passed [from v. 55 to 60] on the most celebrated Roman writers, being only a representation of the *popular* opinion, not of the poet's *own*, the commendations, given to them, are deserved, or otherwise, just as it chances.

*Interdum volgus rectum videt, est ubi peccat.*

To give an instance of this in the line before us.

A critic of unquestioned authority acquaints us, wherein the *real distinct merit* of these two dramatic writers consists. "In ARGUMENTIS, Caecilius palmam poscit; in ETHESIN, TERENTIUS." [Varro.] Now by *gravitate*, as applied to Caecilius, we may properly enough understand the *grave and affecting cast* of his comedy; which is further confirmed by what the same critic elsewhere observes of

him. "PATHE Trabea, Attilius, et CAECILIUS facile "moverunt." But Terence's characteristic of *painting the manners*, which is, plainly, the right interpretation of Varro's ETHESIN, is not so significantly expressed by the attribute *arte*, here given to him. The word indeed is of large and general import, and may admit of various senses; but being here applied to a *dramatic* writer, it most naturally and properly denotes the *peculiar* art of his profession, that is, *the artificial contexture of the plot*. And this I doubt not was the very praise, the town-critics of Horace's time intended to bestow on this poet. The matter is easily explained.

The simplicity and exact unity of the plots in the Greek comedies would be, of course, uninteresting to a people, not thoroughly instructed in the genuin beauties of the drama. They had too thin a contexture to satisfy the gross and lumpish taste of a Roman auditory. The Latin poets, therefore, bethought themselves of combining two stories into one. And this, which is what we call the *double plot*, affording the opportunity of more incidents, and a greater variety of *action*, was perfectly suited to their apprehensions. But, of all the Latin Comedians, *Terence* appears to have practised this secret most assiduously: at least, as may be concluded from what remains of them. *Plautus* hath very frequently *single plots*, which he was enabled to support by, what was natural to him, a force of buffoon pleasantry. *Terence*, whose genius lay another way, or whose taste was

abhorrent from such ribaldry, had recourse to the other expedient of *double plots*. And this, I suppose, is what gained him the popular reputation of being the most *artificial* writer for the stage. The HECYRA is the only one of his comedies, of the true ancient cast. And we know how it came off in the representation. That ill-success and the simplicity of its conduct have continued to draw upon it the same unfavourable treatment from the critics, to this day; who constantly speak of it, as much inferior to the rest; whereas, for the genuin beauty of dramatic design, and the observance, after the ancient Greek manner, of the nice dependency and coherence of the *fable*, throughout, it is, indisputably, to every reader of true taste, the most masterly and exquisite of the whole collection.

63. INTERDUM VOLGUS RECTUM VIDET: EST UBI PECCAT.] The capricious levity of *popular opinion* hath been noted even to a proverb. And yet it is this, which, after all, *fixes* the fate of authors. This seemingly odd phaenomenon I would thus account for.

What is usually complimented with the high and reverend appellation of *public judgment* is, in any single instance, but the repetition or echo, for the most part eagerly catched and strongly reverberated on all sides, of a few leading voices, which have happened to gain the confidence, and so direct the *cry* of the public. But (as, in fact, it too often falls

out) this prerogative of the *few* may be abused to the prejudice of the *many*. The partialities of friendship, the fashionableness of the writer, his compliance with the reigning taste, the lucky concurrence of time and opportunity, the cabal of a party, nay, the very freaks of whim and caprice, these, or any of them, as occasion serves, can support the dullest, as the opposite disadvantages can depress the noblest performance; and give a currency or neglect to *either*, far beyond what the genuin character of each demands. Hence the *public voice*, which is but the aggregate of these corrupt judgments, infinitely multiplied, is, with the wise, at such a juncture, deservedly of little esteem. Yet, in a succession of such *judgments*, delivered at different times and by different sets or juntos of these sovereign arbiters of the fate of authors, the public opinion naturally gets clear of these accidental corruptions. Every fresh succession shakes off some; till, by degrees, the work is seen in its proper form, unsupported of every other recommendation, than what its native inherent excellence bestows upon it. Then, and not till then, *the voice of the people* becomes sacred; after which it soon advances into *divinity*, before which all ages must fall down and worship. For now Reason alone, without her corrupt assessors, takes the chair. And her sentence, when once promulgated and authorized by the general voice, fixes the unalterable doom of authors. ΟΛΩΣ ΚΑΛΑ ΝΟΜΙΖΕ ΥΨΗ ΚΑΙ ΑΛΗΘΙΝΑ, ΤΑ ΔΙΑΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΑΡΕΣΚΟΝΤΑ

ΚΑΙ ΠΑΣΙΝ [Longinus, § vii.] And the reason follows, agreeably to the account here given. Ὅταν γὰρ τοῖς ἀπὸ διαφόρων ΕΠΙΤΗΔΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ, ΒΙΩΝ, ΖΗΛΩΝ, ΗΛΙΚΙΩΝ, λόγων, ἕν τι καὶ ταυτὸν ἅμα περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἅπασι δοκῇ, τόθ' ἡ ἐξ ἀσυμφώνων ὡς κρίσις καὶ συγκατάθεσις τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ θαυμαζομένῳ ΠΙΣΤΙΝ ΙΣΧΥΡΑΝ ΛΑΜΒΑΝΕΙ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΜΦΙΛΕΚΤΟΝ. [Ibid.]

This is the true account of *popular fame*, which, while it well explains the ground of the poet's aphorism, suggests an obvious remark, but very mortifying to every candidate of literary glory. It is, that, whether he succeeds in his endeavours after public applause, or not, *fame* is equally out of his reach, and, as the moral poet teaches, *a thing beyond him, before his death*, on either supposition. For at the very time, that this bewitching music is sounding in his ears, he can never be sure, if, instead of the divine consentient harmony of a just praise, it be not only the discordant din and clamour of ignorance or prepossession.

If there be any exception to this melancholy truth, it must be in the case of some uncommon genius, whose superior power breaks through all impediments in his road to fame, and forces applause even from those very prejudices, that would obstruct his career to it. It was the rare felicity of the poet, just mentioned, to receive, in his life-time, this sure and pleasing augury of immortality.

88. INGENIIS NON ILLE FAVET, &c.] MALHERBE was to the French, pretty much what HORACE had been to the Latin, poetry. These great writers had, each of them, rescued the lyric muse of their country out of the rude, ungracious hands of their old poets. And, as their talents of a *good ear, elegant judgment,* and *correct expression,* were the same, they presented her to the public in all the air and grace, and yet *severity,* of beauty, of which her form was susceptible. Their merits and pretensions being thus far resembling, the reader may not be incurious to know the fate and fortune of *each. Horace* hath very frankly told us, what befel himself from the malevolent and low passions of his countrymen. *Malherbe* did not come off, with the wits and critics of his time, much better; as we learn from a learned person, who hath very warmly recommended his writings to the public. Speaking of the envy, which pursued him in his *prose-works,* but, says he, "Comme il faisoit une particuliere profession de la "*poesie,* c'est en cette qualité qu'il a de plus severes "censeurs, et receu des injustices plus signalées. "Mais il me semble que je fermerai la bouche à "ceux, que le blament, quand je leur aurai monstré, "que sa façon d'escrire est excellente, quoiqu'elle "s'eloigne un peu de celle des NOS ANCIENS POETES, "QU'ILS LOUENT PLUSTOT PAR UN DEGOUST DES "CHOSES PRESENTES, QUE PAR LES SENTIMENTS D'UNE "VERITABLE ESTIME." [DISC. DE M. GODEAU SUR LES OEUVRES DE M. MALHERBE.]

97. SUSPENDIT MENTEM VULTUMQUE.] The expression hath great elegance, and is not liable to the imputation of *harsh, or improper construction.* For *suspendit* is not taken, with regard either to *mentem* or *vultum,* in its *literal,* but *figurative,* signification; and, thus, it becomes, in one and the *same* sense, applicable to *both.*

Otherwise, this way of coupling *two substantives* to a *verb,* which does not, in strict grammatical usage, *govern* both; or, if it doth, must needs be construed in different senses; hath given just offence to the best critics.

Mr. Pope censures a passage of this kind, in the *Iliad,* with severity; and thinks *the taste of the ancients was, in general, too good for those fooleries*[f].

Mr. Addison is perfectly of the same mind, as appears from his criticism on that line in Ovid, *Consiliis, non curribus utere nostris,* "This way "of joining, says he, two such different ideas as "chariot and counsel to the same verb, is mightily "used by *Ovid,* but is a very low kind of wit, and "has always in it a mixture of *pun*; because the verb "must be taken in a different sense, when it is joined "with one of the things, from what it has in con-"junction with the other. Thus in the end of this "story he tells you, that Jupiter flung a thunder-"bolt at Phaëton; *pariterque animaque rotisque*

f [B. ix. v. 641.]

"*expulit aurigam*: where he makes a forced piece of "*Latin (animâ expulit aurigam)* that he may couple "the soul and the wheels to the same verb[g]."

These, the reader will think, are pretty good authorities. For, in matters of *taste*, I know of none, that more deserve to be regarded. The *mere verbal critic*, one would think, should be cautious, how he opposed himself to them. And yet a very learned Dutchman, who has taken great pains in *elucidating* an old Greek love-story, which, with its more passionate admirers, may, perhaps, pass for the MARIANNE of antiquity, hath not scrupled to censure this decision of their's very sharply[h].

Having transcribed the censure of Mr. Pope, who, indeed, somewhat too hastily, suspects the line in Homer for an Interpolation, our critic fastens upon him directly. EN COR ZENODOTI, EN JECUR CRATETIS! But foul language and fair criticism are different things; and what he offers of the *latter* rather accounts for than justifies the *former*. All he says on the subject, is in the good old way of *authorities*, which he diligently rakes together out of every corner of Greek and Roman antiquity. From all these he concludes, as he thinks, irresistibly, not that the passage in question *might* be *genuin* (for that few would dispute with him) but that the kind of expres-

g *Notes on the story of Phaëton.* [v. 23.]

h JACOBI PHILIPPI D' ORVILLE *Animadversiones in* CHARIT. APHROD. lib iv. c. 4.

sion itself is a *real beauty*. *Bona elocutio est: honesta figura*. Though, to the praise of his discretion be it remembered, he does not even venture on this assertion, without his usual support of *precedent*. And, for want of a better, he takes up with old *Servius*. For so, it seems, this grammarian hath declared himself, with respect to some expressions of the same kind in *Virgil*.

But let him make the best of his authorities. And, when he has done that, I shall take the liberty to assure him, that the persons, he contends against, do not think themselves, in the least, concerned with them. For, though he believes it an undeniable maxim, *Critici non esse inquirere, utrum recte autor quid scripserit, sed an omnino sic scripserit*[i]: yet, in the case before us, he must not be surprized, if others do not so conceive of it.

Indeed, where the critic would defend the *authenticity* of a word or expression, the way of *precedent* is, doubtless, the very best, that common sense allows to be taken. For the evidence of *fact*, at once, bears down all suspicion of *corruption* or *interpolation*. Again; if the *elegance* of single words (or of intire phrases, where the suspicion turns on the *oddity or uncommoness of the construction*, only) be the matter in dispute, full and precise authorities must decide it. For *elegance*, here, means nothing else but the practice of the best writers. And thus

[i] Ibid. vol. ii. p. 325.

far I would join issue with the learned censurer; and should think he did well in prescribing this rule to himself in the correction of *approved ancient authors.*

But what have these cases to do with the point in question? The objection is made, not to *words*, which alone are capable of being justified by authority, but to *things*, which must ever be what they are, in spite of it. This mode of writing is shewn to be abundantly defective, for reasons taken from *the nature of our ideas, and the end and genius of the nobler forms of composition.* And what is it to tell us, that great writers have overlooked or neglected them?

1. In our customary train of *thinking*, the mind is carried along, *in succession*, from *one* clear and distinct idea to *another*. Or, if the attention be *at once* employed on *two senses*, there is ever such a close and near analogy betwixt them, that the perceptive faculty, easily and almost instantaneously passing from the one to the other, is not divided in its regards betwixt them, but even seems to itself to consider them, as *one*: as is the case with *metaphor*: and, universally, with all the just forms of *allusion.* The union between the *literal* and *figurative* sense is so strict, that they run together in the imagination; and the effect of the *figure* is only to let in fresh light and lustre on the *literal* meaning. But now, when *two different, unconnected ideas* are obtruded, at the same time upon us, the mind suffers a kind of

violence and distraction, and is thereby put out of that natural state, in which it so much delights. To take the learned writer's instance from Polybius: ΕΛΠΙΔΑ *καὶ* ΚΕΙΡΑ ΠΡΟΣΛΑΜΒΑΝΕΙΝ. How different is the idea of *collecting forces*, and of that *act* of the mind, which we call *taking courage!* These two *perceptions* are not only distinct from each other, but totally unconnected by any *natural* bond of relationship betwixt them. And yet the word ΠΡΟΣΛΑΜΒΑΝΕΙΝ must be seen in this double view, before we can take the full meaning of the historian.

2. This conjunction of *unrelated* ideas, by the means of a *common term*, agrees as ill to the *end and genius of the writer's composition*, as *the natural bent and constitution of the mind.* For the question is only about the *greater poetry*, which addresses itself to the PASSIONS, OR IMAGINATION. And, in either case, this play of words which Mr. Pope condemns, must be highly out of season.

When we are necessitated, as it were, to look different ways, and actually to contemplate two unconnected significations of the same word, before we can thoroughly comprehend its purpose, the mind is more amused by this fanciful conjunction of ideas, than is consistent with the artless, undesigning simplicity of *passion*. It disturbs and interrupts the flow of *affection*, by presenting this disparted image to the *fancy*. Again; where *fancy* itself is solely addressed, as in the *nobler descriptive species*, this arbitrary assemblage of ideas is not less improper.

For the poet's business is now, to astonish or entertain the mind with a succession of *great* or *beautiful* images. And the intervention of this juggler's trick diverts the thought from contemplating its proper scenery. We should be admiring some glorious representation of *nature*, and are stopped, on a sudden, to observe the writer's *art*, whose ingenuity can fetch, out of one word, two such foreign and discrepant meanings.

In the lighter forms of poetry indeed, and more especially in the *burlesque epic*, this affectation has its *place;* as in that line of Mr. Pope, quoted by this critic;

*sometimes counsel* takes, *and sometimes tea.*

For 1. The writer's intention is here, not to *affect the passions*, or *transport the fancy*, but solely to *divert and amuse*. And to such *end* this species of trifling is very apposite. 2. The *manner*, which the burlesque epic takes to divert, is by confounding *great things with small*. A *mode of speech* then, which favours such *confusion*, is directly to its purpose. 3. This poem is, by its nature, *satyrical*, and, like the *old comedy*, delights in exposing the faults and vices of *composition*. So that the *expression* is here properly employed (and this was, perhaps, the *first* view of the writer) to ridicule the use of it in *grave works*. If M. *D'Orville* then could seriously design to confute Mr. Pope's criticism by his own practice in that line of the *Rape of the*

*Lock*, he has only shewn, that he does not, in the least, comprehend the real genius of this poem. But to return:

There is, as appears to me, but one case, in which this *double sense* of words can be admitted in the more solemn forms of poetry. It is, when, besides the plain literal meaning, which the context demands, the mind is carried forward to some more illustrious and important object. We have an instance in the famous line of Virgil,

*Attollens humeris famamque et fata nepotum.*

But this is so far from contradicting, that it furthers the writer's proper intention. We are not called off from the *subject matter* to the observation of a *conceit*, but to the admiration of *kindred* sublime conceptions. For even here, it is to be observed, there is always required some previous dependency and relationship, though not extremely obvious, in the natures of the things themselves, whereon to ground and justify the analogy. Otherwise, the intention of the *double sense* is perfectly inexcusable.

But the instance from Virgil, as we have seen it explained (and for the first time) by a great critic[1], is so curious, that I shall be allowed to enlarge a little upon it: and the rather as Virgil's practice in this instance will let us into the true secret of conducting these *double senses*.

The comment of *Servius* on this line is remarkable. "Hunc versum notant Critici, quasi super-

[1] D. L. vol. ii. p. 644.

"flue et inutiliter additum, nec convenientem *gra-*
"*vitati* ejus, namque est magis *neotericus*." Mr. Addison conceived of it in the same manner when he said, "*This was the only witty line in the Æneis*;" meaning such a line as *Ovid* would have written. We see the opinion which these Critics entertained of the *double sense*, in *general*, in the greater Poetry. They esteemed it a wanton play of fancy, misbecoming the dignity of the writer's work, and the gravity of his character. They took it, in short, for a mere *modern* flourish, totally different from the pure unaffected manner of genuin antiquity. And thus far they unquestionably judged right. Their defect was in not seeing that the *use* of it, as here employed by the Poet, was an exception to the *general rule*. But to have seen this was not, perhaps, to be expected even from these Critics.

However, from this want of penetration arose a difficulty in determining whether to read, *Facta* or *Fata* Nepotum. And, as we now understand that *Servius* and his Critics were utter strangers to Virgil's noble idea, it is no wonder they could not resolve it. But the *latter* is the Poet's own word. He considered this shield of celestial make as a kind of Palladium, like the ANCILE, which fell from Heaven, and used to be carried in procession on the shoulders of the SALII. "Quid de scutis," says Lactantius, "jam vetustate putridis dicam? Quae cum
"portant, *Deos ipsos se gestare* HUMERIS SUIS *ar-*
"*bitrantur*." [Div. Inst. l. i. c. 21.]

Virgil, in a fine flight of imagination, alludes to this venerable ceremony, comparing, as it were, the shield of his Hero to the sacred ANCILE; and in conformity to the practice in that sacred procession represents his Hero in the priestly office of Religion,

*Attollens* HUMERO *famamque et* FATA *Nepotum.*

This idea then of the sacred shield, the guard and glory of Rome, and on which, in this advanced situation, depended the fame and fortune of his country, the poet, with extreme elegance and sublimity, transfers to the shield which guarded their great progenitor, while he was laying the first foundations of the Roman Empire.

But to return to the subject before us. What has been said of the impropriety of *double senses,* holds of *the construction of a single term in two senses,* even though its authorized usage may equally admit *both.* So that I cannot be of a mind with the learned critic's *wise men*[k]; *who acknowledge an extreme elegance in this form, when the governing verb equally corresponds to the two substantives.* But when it properly can be applied but to *one* of them, and with some force and straining only, to the *second,* as commonly happens with the application of *one verb* to *two substantives,* it then degenerates, as Mr. Addison observes, into a mere *quib-*

k At inspiciamus porrò, quid alii, *quibus correctius sapit,* de hoc loquendi modo CENSUERINT. Agnoscunt enim, etc. p. 299.

*ble*, and is utterly incompatible with the graver forms of composition. And for this we have the concurrent authority of the *cordati* themselves, who readily admit, *duram admodum et καταχρηστικωτέραν fieri orationem, si verbum hoc ab alterutro abhorreat*[1]. Without softening matters, besides the former absurdity of *a second sense*, we are now indebted to a forced and barbarous construction for *any* second sense *at all*.

But surely this venerable bench of critics, to whom our censurer thinks fit to make his solemn appeal, were not aware of the imprudence of this concession. For why, if one may presume to ask, is the *latter* use of this *figure* condemned, but for reasons, which shew the manifest absurdity of the thing, however countenanced by authorities? And is not this the case of the *former*? Or, is the transgression of the standing rules of *good sense*, in the judgment of these *censors*, a more pardonable crime in a writer, than of *common usage or grammar*?

After all, since he lays so great stress on his *authorities*, it may not be amiss to consider the proper force of them.

The form of speaking under consideration has been censured as a *trifling, affected witticism*. This *censure* he hopes entirely to elude by shewing it was in use, more especially among two sorts of persons, the least likely to be infected with *wrong*

[1] Ibid.

*taste*, the *oldest*, that is to say, the *simplest*; and the most *refined* writers. In short, he thinks to stop all mouths by alledging instances from *Homer* and *Virgil*.

But what if Homer and Virgil in the few examples of this kind to be met with in their writings have *erred?* And, which is more, what if that very *simplicity* on the one hand, and *refinement* on the other, which he builds so much upon, can be shewn to be the *natural* and almost necessary *occasions* of their falling into such *errors?* This, I am persuaded, was the truth of the case. For,

1. In the *simpler ages of learning*, when, as yet, composition is not turned into an *art*, but every writer, especially of vehement and impetuous genius, is contented to put down his *first thoughts*, and, for their *expression*, takes up with the most obvious words and phrases, that present themselves to him, this improper construction will not be unfrequent. For the writer, who is not knowing enough to take offence at these niceties, having an immediate occasion to express *two things*, and finding *one word*, which, in common usage, at least with a little straining, extends to *both*, he looks no further, but, as suspecting no fault, employs it without scruple. And I am the more confirmed in this account, from observing, that sometimes, where the governing *verb* cannot be made to bear this double sense, and yet the meaning of the writer is clear enough from the context, the proper word is altogether omitted.

Of this kind are several of the *modes of speaking*, alledged by the writer as instances of the *double sense*. As in that of Sophocles[m], where Electra, giving orders to Chrysothemis, about the disposal of the libations, destined for the tomb of her father, delivers herself thus,

ΑΛΛ' ἡ ΠΝΟΑΙΣΙΝ, ἡ βαθυσκαφεῖ ΚΟΝΕΙ
ΚΡΥΨΟΝ νιν.

The writer's first intention was to look out for some such *verb*, as would equally correspond to πνοαῖς and κόνει, but this not occurring, he sets down one, that only agrees to the last, and leaves the other to be understood or supplied by the reader; as it easily might, the scope of the place necessarily directing him to it. It cannot be supposed, that Sophocles designed to say, κρύψον πνοαῖς. There is no affinity of *sense* or *sound* to lead him to such construction. Again: in that verse of Homer[n],

ἵΠΠΟΙ αἐρσίποδες, καὶ ποικίλα ΤΕΥΧΕ' ΕΚΕΙΤΟ,

the poet never meant to say ἵπποι ἔκειντο, but neglectingly left it thus, as trusting the nature of the thing would instruct the reader to supply ἔςασαν, or some such word, expressive of the *posture* required.

Nay, writers of more exactness than these simple Greek poets have occasionally overlooked such inaccuracies: as Cicero[o], who, when more intent on his *argument*, than *expression*, lets fall this impropriety, *Nec vero* SUPRA TERRAM, *sed etiam* IN INTIMIS EJUS

m v. 437. n Iliad, Γ. 327. o N. D. ii. 64.

TENEBRIS *plurimarum rerum* LATET *utilitas*. 'Tis plain, the writer, conceiving *extat*, *patet*, or some such word, to be necessarily suggested by the tenor of his sentence, never troubled himself to go back to insert it. Yet these are brought as examples of the *double application of single words*. The truth is, they are examples of *indiligence* in the writers, and as such, may shew us, how easily they might fall, for the same reason, into the impropriety of *double senses*. In those of this class then the impropriety, complained of, is the effect of mere *inattention or carelessness*.

2. On the other hand, when this negligent simplicity of *thinking and speaking* gives way to the utmost polish and refinement in *both*, we are then to expect it, for the contrary reason. For the more obvious and natural forms of writing being, now, grown common, are held insipid, and the public taste demands to be gratified by the seasoning of a more studied and artificial expression. It is not enough to *please*, the writer must find means to *strike* and *surprize*. And hence the *antithesis*, the *remote allusion*, and every other mode of *affected eloquence*. But of these the *first* that prevails, is the application of the *double sense*. For the general use justifying it, it easily passes with the reader and writer too, for *natural* expression; and yet as splitting the attention suddenly, and at once, on two different views, carries with it all the novelty and surprize, that are wanted. When the public taste is not, yet, far gone in this refinement, and the

writer hath himself the truest taste (which was VIRGIL's case) such affectations will not be very common; or, when they do occur, will, for the most part, be agreeably softened. As in the instance of *retroque pedem cum voce repressit*; where, by making *voce* immediately dependent on the *preposition*, and remotely on the *verb*, he softens the harshness of the expression, which seems much more tolerable in this form, than if he had put it, *pedem vocemque repressit*. So again in the line,

*Crudeles aras trajectaque pectora ferro*
*Nudavit*,

the incongruity of *the two senses* in *nudavit*, is the less perceived from its *metaphorical application* to *one* of them.

But the desire of *pleasing continually*, which, in the circumstances supposed, insensibly grows into a *habit*, must, of necessity, betray writers of less taste and exactness into the frequent commission of this fault. Which, as Mr. Addison takes notice, was remarkably the case with OVID.

The purpose of all this is to shew, that the use of this *form of speaking* arose from *negligence*, or *affectation*, never from *judgment*. And such being the obvious, and, it is presumed, true account of the matter, the learned *Animadvertor* on CHARITON is left, as I said, to make the best of his *authorities*; or, even to enlarge his list of them with the *Centuries*[o] of his good friends, at his leisure. For till he

[o] Pag. 397.

can tell us of a writer, who; neither in his *careless*, nor *ambitious* humours, is capable of this folly, his accumulated citations, were they more to his purpose, than many of them are, will do him little service. Unless perhaps we are to give up common sense to authority, and pride ourselves on mimicking the very defects of our *betters*. And even here he need not be at a loss for *precedents*. For so the disciples of Plato, we are told, in former times, affected to be *round-shouldered*, in compliment to their master; and Aristotle's worshipers, because of a natural impediment in this philosopher's speech, thought it to their credit to turn *Stammerers*. And without doubt, while this fashion prevailed, there were critics, who found out a *Je ne sçai quoi* in the *air* of the one party, and in the *eloquence* of the other.

97. SUSPENDIT PICTA VULTUM MENTEMQUE TABELLA;] Horace judiciously describes *painting* by that peculiar circumstance, which does most honour to this fine art. It is, that, in the hands of a master, it attaches, not the *eyes* only, but the very *soul*, to its representation of the *human affections and manners*. For it is in contemplating *subjects* of this kind, that the mind, with a fond and eager attention, *hangs* on the picture. Other imitations may *please*, but this warms and transports with *passion*. And, because whatever addresses itself immediately to the *eye*, affects us most, hence it is, that painting,

so employed, becomes more efficacious to express the *manners* and imprint *characters*, than poetry itself: or rather, hath the advantages of the best and usefullest species of poetry, the *dramatic*, when enforced by just action on the stage.

Quintilian gives it the like preference to *Oratory*. Speaking of the use of *action* in an orator, he observes, "Is [gestus] quantum habeat in oratore, momenti; "satis vel ex eo patet, quod pleraque, etiam citra "verba, significat. Quippe non manus solum, sed "nutus etiam declarant nostram voluntatem, et in "mutis pro sermone sunt: et salutatio frequenter "sine voce intelligitur atque afficit, et ex ingressu "vultuque perspicitur habitus animorum: et ani-"mantium quoque, sermone carentium, ira, laeti-"tia, adulatio, et oculis et quibusdam aliis corporis "signis deprehenditur. Nec mirum, si ista, quae "tamen aliquo sunt posita motu, tantum in animis "valent: quum *pictura, tacens opus, et habitus* "*semper ejusdem, sic intimos penetret affectus, ut* "*ipsam vim dicendi nonnunquam superare vide-*"*atur*[p]."

We see then of what importance it is, since *affections* of every kind are equally within his power, that the painter apply himself to excite only *those*, which are subservient to good morals. An importance, of which Aristotle himself (who was no enthusiast in the fine arts) was so sensible, that he gives it in charge, amongst other political instruc-

p Inst. Orat. xi. 3.

tions, to the governors of youth, "that they allow "them to see no other pictures, than such as have "this moral aim and tendency; of which kind were "more especially those of POLYGNOTUS." [POLIT. lib. viii. c. 5.]

For the *manner*, in which this moral efficacy of picture is brought about, we find it agreeably explained in that conversation of *Socrates* with *Parrhasius* in the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon. The whole may be worth considering.

"PAINTING, said Socrates, one day, in a conver-"sation with the painter Parrhasius, is, I think, "the resemblance or imitation of sensible objects. "For you represent in colours, bodies of all sorts, "*hollow and projecting, bright and obscure, hard* "*and soft, old and new.* "We do." And, when "you would draw beautiful pourtraits, since it is "not possible to find any *single figure* of a man, "faultless in all its parts and of exact proportion; "your way is to collect, from *several*, those mem-"bers or features, which are most perfect in each, "and so, by joining them together, to compound "one whole body, completely beautiful. "That "is our method." What then, continued Socrates, "and are you not able, also, to imitate in colours, "the MANNERS; those tendencies and dispositions "of the soul, which are benevolent, friendly, and "amiable; such as inspire love and affection into "the heart, and whose soft insinuations carry with "them the power of persuasion?

"How, replied Parrhasius, can the pencil imitate "*that*, which hath no proportion, colour, or any "other of those properties, you have been just now "enumerating, as the objects of sight?" Why, is it "not true, returned Socrates, that a man sometimes "casts a *kind*, sometimes, an *angry*, look on others? "It is." There must then be something in the "eyes capable of expressing those passions. "There "must." And is there not a wide difference be-"tween the look of him, who takes part in the pro-"sperity of a friend, and another, who sympathizes "with him in his sorrows? "Undoubtedly, there is "the widest. The countenance, in the one case, ex-"presses joy, in the other, concern." These af-"fections may then be represented in picture. "They may so." In like manner, all other dispo-"sitions of our nature, *the lofty and the liberal*, "*the abject and ungenerous, the temperate and* "*the prudent, the petulant and profligate*, these "are severally discernible by the *look or attitude*: "and that, whether we observe men in *action*, or "at *rest*. "They are." And these, therefore, "come within the power of graphical imitation? "They do." Which then, concluded Socrates, do "you believe, men take the greatest pleasure in "contemplating; such imitations, as set before "them the GOOD, the LOVELY, and the FAIR, or "those, which represent the BAD, the HATEFUL, "and the UGLY, *qualities and affections of huma-*"*nity*? There can be no doubt, said Parrhasius,

"of their giving the preference to the former." [Lib. iii.]

The conclusion, the *philosopher* drives at in this conversation, and which the *painter* readily concedes to him, is what, I am persuaded, every master of the art would be willing to act upon, were he at liberty to pursue the bent of his natural genius and inclination. But it unfortunately happens, to the infinite prejudice of this *mode of imitation*, above all others, that the artist *designs* not so much what the dignity of his profession requires of him, or the general taste of those, he would most wish for his judges, approves; as what the rich or noble *Connoisseur*, who *bespeaks* his work, and prescribes the subject, demands. What this has usually been, let the history of ancient and modern painting declare[q]. Yet, considering its vast power in MORALS, as explained above, one cannot enough lament the ill destiny of this divine ART; which, from the chaste hand-maid of *virtue*, hath been debauched, in violence to her nature, to a shameless prostitute of *vice*, and procuress of *pleasure*.

117. SCRIBIMUS INDOCTI DOCTIQUE POEMATA PASSIM.] The DOCTI POETAE have at all times been esteemed by the wise and good, or, rather, have been

[q] There having been such wretches, as the Painter Plutarch speaks of — Χαιρεφάνης, ἀκολάστους ὁμιλίας γυναικῶν ποιούς ἔνδοξος. De Aud. Poet.

reverenced, as Plato speaks, ὥσπερ πατέρες τῆς σοφίας καὶ ἡγεμόνες.

As for the INDOCTI, we may take their character as drawn by the severe, but just pen of our great Milton — "Poetas equidem verè doctos et diligo et "colo et audiendo saepissimè delector — istos verò "versiculorum nugivendos quis non oderit? quo "genere nihil stultius aut vanius aut corruptius, aut "mendacius. Laudant, vituperant, sine delectu, "sine discrimine, judicio aut modo, nunc principes, "nunc plebeios, doctos juxta atque indoctos, pro-"bos an improbos perindè habent; prout cantharus, "aut spes nummuli, aut fatuus ille furor inflat ac "rapit; congestis undique et verborum et rerum "tot discoloribus ineptiis tamque putidis, ut lauda-"tum longè praestet sileri, et pravo, quod aiunt, "vivere naso, quàm sic laudari: vituperatus verò "qui sit, haud mediocri sanè honori sibi ducat, se "tam absurdis, tam stolidis nebulonibus displicere." DEF. SECUND. PRO POP. ANG. p. 337. 4to Lond. 1753.

118. HIC ERROR TAMEN, &c.] What follows from hence to v. 136, containing an encomium on *the office of poets*, is one of the leading beauties in the epistle. Its artifice consists in this, that, under the cover of a negligent commendation, interspersed with even some *traits* of pleasantry upon them, it insinuates to the emperor, in the manner the least offensive and ostentatious, the genuin merits, and even *sacredness* of their character. The whole is a

fine instance of that address, which, in delivering rules for this kind of writing, the poet prescribes elsewhere.

*Et sermone opus est modo tristi, saepe jocoso,*
*Defendente vicem modo Rhetoris atque Poetae;*
*Interdum* URBANI PARCENTIS VIRIBUS ATQUE
EXTENUANTIS EAS CONSULTO. [1 S. x. 14.]

This conduct, in the place before us, shews the poet's exquisite knowledge of *human nature*. For there is no surer method of removing prejudices, and gaining over *others* to an esteem of any thing we would recommend, than by not appearing to lay too great a stress on it *ourselves*. It is, further, a proof of his intimate acquaintance with the peculiar turn of the *great*; who, not being forward to think highly of any thing but themselves and their own dignities, are, with difficulty, brought to conceive of other accomplishments, as of much value; and can only be won by the fair and candid address of their apologist, who must be sure not to carry his praises and pretensions too high. It is this art of entering into the *characters, prejudices, and expectations* of others, and of knowing to suit our application, prudently, but with innocence, to them, which constitutes what we call A KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD. An art, of which the great poet was a consummate master, and than which there cannot be a more useful or amiable quality. Only we must take care not to confound it with that supple, versatile, and in-

triguing genius, which, taking all shapes, and reflecting all characters, generally passes for it in the commerce of the world, or rather is prized much above it; but, as requiring no other talents in the possessor than those of a *low cunning* and *corrupt design*, is of all others the most mischievous, worthless, and contemptible character, that infests human life.

118. HIC ERROR TAMEN ET LEVIS HAEC INSANIA QUANTAS VIRTUTES HABEAT, SIC COLLIGE:] This apology for *poets*, and, in them, for *poetry* itself, though delivered with much apparent negligence and unconcern, yet, if considered, will be found to comprize in it every thing, that any, or all, of its most zealous advocates have ever pretended in its behalf. For it comprehends,

I. [From v. 118 to 124,] THE PERSONAL GOOD QUALITIES OF THE POET. Nothing is more insisted on by those, who take upon themselves the patronage and recommendation of any *art*, than that it tends to raise in the professor of it all those *virtues*, which contribute most to his *own* proper enjoyment, and render him most agreeable to *others*. Now this, it seems, may be urged, on the side of *poetry*, with a peculiar force. For not only the *study* of this art hath a *direct* tendency to produce a neglect or disregard of *worldly honours and emoluments* (from the too eager appetite of which almost all the *calamities*, as well as the more unfriendly *vices*, of

men arise) but he, whom the benign aspect of the muse hath glanced upon and destined for her peculiar service, is, by *constitution*, which is ever the best security, fortified against the attacks of them. Thus his RAPTURES in the enjoyment of his muse make him overlook *the common accidents of life* [v. 121]; *he is generous, open, and undesigning, by* NATURE [v. 122]; to which we must not forget to add, that he is *temperate*, that is to say, *poor*, by PROFESSION.

VIVIT SILIQUIS ET PANE SECUNDO.

II. [From v. 124 to 132.] THE UTILITY OF THE POET TO THE STATE: and this both on a *civil* and *moral* account. For, 1. the poets, whom we read in our younger years, and from whom we learn the *power of words*, and *hidden harmony of numbers*, that is, as a profound Scotchman teaches, the *first and most essential principles* of eloquence[r], enable, by degrees, and instruct their pupil to appear with advantage, in that extensively useful capacity of a public speaker. And, indeed, graver writers, than our poet, have sent the orator to this school. But the pretensions of poetry go much farther. It delights [from v. 130 to 132] to immortalize the triumphs of virtue: to *record* or *feign* illustrious examples of heroic worth, for the service of the *rising age*: and, which is the last and best fruit of philosophy itself, it can relieve even the languor of

[r] See an essay on the *Composition of the Antients*, by J. GEDDES, Esq.

*ill-health*, and sustain *poverty* herself under the scorn and insult of contumelious opulence. 2. In a *moral* view its services are not less considerable. (For it may be observed the *poet* was so far of a mind with the *philosopher*, to give no quarter to *immoral* poets). And to this end it serves, 1. [v. 127] *in turning the ear of youth* from that early corruptor of its innocence, the seducement of a *loose and impure communication*. 2. Next [v. 128] in forming our riper age (which it does with all the address and tenderness of *friendship*: AMICIS *praeceptis) by the sanctity and wisdom of its precepts.* And, 3. which is the proper office of *tragedy, in correcting the excesses of the natural passions* [v. 122]. The reader who doth not turn himself to the original, will be apt to mistake this detail of the virtues of poetry, for an account of the Policy and Legislation of ancient and modern times; whose proudest boast, when the philanthropy of their enthusiastic projectors ran at the highest, was but to *prevent the impressions of vice*: to *form the mind to habits of virtue*: and *to curb and regulate the passions*.

III. HIS SERVICES TO RELIGION. This might well enough be said, whether by *religion* we understand an *internal reverence* of the Gods, which poetry first and principally intended; or their *popular adoration and worship*, which, by its *fictions*, as of necessity conforming to the received fancies of superstition, it must greatly tend to promote and

establish. But the poet, artfully seizing a circumstance, which supposes and includes in it both these respects, renders his defence vastly interesting.

All the customary *addresses* of Heathenism to its gods, more especially on any great and solemn emergency, were the work of the poet. For *nature*, it seems, had taught the pagan world, what the Hebrew Prophets themselves did not disdain to practice, that, to lift the imagination, and, with it, the sluggish affections of human nature, to Heaven, it was expedient to lay hold on every assistance of art. They therefore presented their supplications to the Divinity in the richest and brightest dress of eloquence, which is poetry. Not to insist, that *devotion*, when sincere and ardent, from its very *nature*, enkindles a glow of thought, which communicates strongly with the transports of poetry. Hence *the language of the Gods* (for so was poetry accounted, as well from its being the divinest species of communication, our rude conceptions can well frame even for superior intelligencies, as for that it was the fittest vehicle of our applications to them) became not the ornament only, but an *essential* in the ceremonial, of paganism. And this, together with an allusion to *a form of public prayer* (for such was his *secular ode)* composed by himself, gives, at once, a grace and sublimity to this part of the apology, which are perfectly inimitable.

Thus hath the great poet, in the compass of a few lines, drawn together a complete defence of his *art*.

For what more could the warmest admirer of poetry, or, because zeal is quickened by opposition, what more could the vehement declaimer against Plato (who proscribed it), urge in its behalf, than that it furnishes, to the poet himself, the surest means of *solitary and social* enjoyment: and further serves to the most important CIVIL, MORAL, and RELIGIOUS purposes?

119. — VATIS AVARUS NON TEMERE EST ANIMUS:] There is an unlucky Italian proverb, which says, *Chi ben scrive, non sara mai ricco.* — The true reason, without doubt, is here given by the poet.

124. MILITIAE QUAMQUAM PIGER ET MALUS,] The observation has much grace, as referring to himself, who had acquired no credit, as a soldier, in the civil wars of his country.—We have an example of this misalliance between the *poetic* and *military* character, recorded in the history of our own civil wars, which may be just worth mentioning. Sir P. Warwick, speaking of the famous Earl of *Newcastle*, observes — "his edge had too much of "the razor in it; for he had a tincture of a romantic "spirit, and had the misfortune to have somewhat "of the Poet in him; so as he chose Sir William "Davenant, an eminent good poet, and loyal gen-"tleman, to be lieutenant-general of his ordnance. "This inclination of his own, and such kind of "witty society (to be modest in the expressions of

"it) diverted many councils, and lost many opportunities, which the nature of that affair, this great "man had now entered into, required." MEMOIRS, p. 235.

132. CASTIS CUM PUERIS, &c.] We have, before, taken notice, how properly the poet, for the easier and more successful introduction of his apology, assumed the person *urbani, parcentis viribus.* We see him here, in *that* of *Rhetoris atque Poetae.* For admonished, as it were, by the rising dignity of his subject, which led him from the *moral,* to speak of the *religious* uses of poetry, he insensibly drops the *badineur,* and takes an air, not of seriousness only, but of solemnity. This change is made with *art.* For the attention is carried from the uses of poetry, in *consoling the unhappy,* by the easiest transition imaginable, to the still more solemn application of it to the *offices of piety.* And its *use* is, to impress on the mind a stronger sense of the weight of the poet's plea, than could have been expected from a more direct and continued declamation. For this is the constant and natural effect of knowing to pass from *gay* to *severe,* with grace and dignity.

169. SED HABET COMOEDIA TANTO PLUS ONERIS, QUANTO VENIAE MINUS.] Tragedy, whose intention is to *affect,* may secure what is most essential to its *kind,* though it fail in some minuter resemblances

of *nature:* Comedy, proposing for its main end *exact representation*, is fundamentally defective, if it do not perfectly succeed in it. And this explains the ground of the poet's observation, that Comedy hath *veniae minus;* for he is speaking of the draught of the *manners* only, in which respect a greater *indulgence* is very deservedly shewn to the tragic than comic writer. But though Tragedy hath thus far the advantage, yet in another respect its laws are more severe than those of Comedy; and that is in the conduct of the *fable*. It may be asked then, which of the two dramas is, on the whole, most difficult. To which the answer is decisive. For Tragedy, whose end is the *Pathos*, produces it by *action*, while Comedy produces its end, the *Humourous*, by *Character*. Now it is much more difficult to paint manners, than to plan action; because *that* requires the philosopher's knowledge of human nature; *this*, only the historian's knowledge of human events.

It is true, in one sense, the *tragic* muse has *veniae minus;* for though grave and pleasant scenes may be indifferently represented, or even mixed together, in comedy, yet, in tragedy, the serious and solemn air must prevail throughout. Indeed, our Shakespear has violated this rule, as he hath, upon occasion, almost every other rule, of just criticism: Whence, some writers, taking advantage of that idolatrous admiration which is generally professed for this great poet, and nauseating, I suppose, the

more common, though juster, forms of literary composition, have been for turning his very transgression of the principles of common sense, into a standing precept for the stage. "It is said, that, if "comedy may be wholly *serious*, why may not "tragedy now and then be indulged in being *gay*?" If these critics be in earnest in putting this question, they need not wait long for an answer. The *end* of comedy being *to paint the manners*, nothing hinders (as I have shewn at large in the dissertation *on the provinces of the drama*) but "that it may "take either character of *pleasant* or *serious*, as it "chances, or even unite them both in one piece:" But the end of tragedy being *to excite the stronger passions*, this discordancy in the subject breaks the flow of those passions, and so prevents, or lessens at least, the very effect which this drama primarily intends. "It is said, indeed, that this constrast of "*grave* and *pleasant* scenes, heightens the *passion*:" if it had been said that it heightens the *surprize*, the observation had been more just. Lastly, "we "are told, that this is nature, which generally "blends together the *ludicrous*, and the *sublime*." But who does not know

*That art is nature to advantage dress'd;*

and that to dress out nature to *advantage* in the present instance, that is, in a composition whose laws are to be deduced from the consideration of its *end*, these characters are to be kept by an artist, perfectly distinct?

However this restraint upon tragedy does not prove that, upon the whole, it has *plus oneris*. All I can allow, is, that either drama has *weight* enough in all reason, for the ablest *shoulders* to sustain.

177. QUEM TULIT AD SCENAM VENTOSO GLORIA CURRU, EXANIMAT LENTUS SPECTATOR, &c. to v. 182.] There is an exquisite spirit of pleasantry in these lines, which hath quite evaporated in the hands of the critics. These have gravely supposed them to come from the *person* of the *poet*, and to contain his serious censure of the vanity of poetic fame. Whereas, besides the manifest absurdity of the thing, its inconsistency with what is delivered elsewhere on this subject [A. P. v. 324.] where the Greeks are commended as being *praeter laudem nullius avari*, absolutely requires us to understand them as proceeding from an *objector*; who, as the poet hath very satirically contrived, is left to expose himself in the very terms of his *objection*. He had just been blaming the venality of the Roman dramatic writers. They had shewn themselves more sollicitous about *filling their pockets*, than deserving the reputation of good poets. And, instead of insisting further on the excellency of this *latter* motive, he stops short, and brings in a bad poet himself to laugh at it.

"And what then, says he, you would have us "yield ourselves to the very wind and gust of praise; "and, dropping all inferior considerations, drive

"away to the expecting stage in the *puffed car of* "*vain-glory?* For what? To be *dispirited*, or "blown up with air, as the capricious spectator "shall think fit to enforce, or withhold, his *in-* "*spirations*. And is this the mighty benefit of "your vaunted passion for fame? No; farewel "the stage, if the breath of others is *that*, on which "the silly bard is to depend for the contraction or "enlargement of his dimensions." To all which convincing rhetoric the poet condescends to say nothing; as well knowing, that no truer service is, oftentimes, done to virtue or good sense, than when a knave or fool is left to himself, to employ his idle raillery against either.

These interlocutory passages, laying open the sentiments of those against whom the poet is disputing, are very frequent in the *critical and moral* writings of Horace, and are well suited to their dramatic genius and original.

210. ILLE PER EXTENTUM FUNEM, &c.] The Romans, who were immoderately addicted to spectacles of every kind, had in particular esteem the *funambuli*, or *rope-dancers*;

> *Ita populus studio stupidus in* FUNAMBULO
> *Animum occuparat.* PROL. in HECYR.

From the admiration of whose tricks the expression, *ire per extentum funem*, came to denote, proverbially, *an uncommon degree of excellence and perfection*

*in any thing.* The allusion is, here, made with much pleasantry, as the poet had just been rallying their fondness for these *extraordinary atchievements.*

Ibid. ILLE PER EXTENTUM FUNEM, &c. to v. 214.] It is observable, that Horace, here, makes his own *feeling* the test of poetical merit. Which is said with a philosophical exactness. For the *pathos* in tragic, *humour* in comic, and the same holds of the *sublime* in the narrative, and of every other *species* of excellence in universal poetry, is the object, not of *reason,* but *sentiment;* and can be estimated only from its *impression* on the mind, not by any speculative or general *rules.* Rules themselves are indeed nothing else but an appeal to *experience;* conclusions drawn from wide and general observation of the aptness and efficacy of certain *means* to produce those *impressions.* So that feeling or sentiment itself is not only the surest, but the sole *ultimate* arbiter of works of genius.

Yet, though this be true, the *invention* of *general rules* is not without its merit, nor the *application* of them without its *use,* as may appear from the following considerations.

It may be affirmed, universally, of all *didactic writing,* that it is employed in *referring particular facts to general principles.* General principles themselves can often be referred to others more general; and these again carried still higher, till we come to a *single* principle, in which all the rest are

involved. When this is done, science of every kind hath attained its highest perfection.

The account, here given, might be illustrated from various instances. But it will be sufficient to confine ourselves to the single one of *criticism*; by which I understand that *species* of didactic writing, which *refers to general rules the virtues and faults of composition*. And the perfection of this *art* would consist in an ability to refer *every* beauty and blemish to a separate class; and *every* class, by a gradual progression, to some *one* single principle. But the *art* is, as yet, far short of perfection. For many of these beauties and blemishes can be referred to no general rule at all; and the rules, which have been discovered, seem many of them unconnected, and not reducible to a common principle. It must be admitted however that such critics are employed in their proper office, as contribute to the *confirmation* of rules already established, or the *invention* of new ones.

Rules already established are then *confirmed*, when more *particulars* are referred to them. The invention of *new* rules implies, 1. A *collection* of various particulars, not yet regulated. 2. A *discovery* of those circumstances of *resemblance* or *agreement*, whereby they become capable of being regulated. And 3. A subsequent *regulation* of them, or arrangement into *one* class according to *such* circumstances of *agreement*. When this is done, the rule is completed. But if the critic is not able

to observe any *common* circumstance of resemblance in the several particulars he hath collected, by which they may, all of them, be referred to one general class, he hath then made no advancement in the *art of criticism.* Yet the collection of his particular observations may be of use to other critics; just as collections of natural history, though no part of philosophy, may yet assist philosophical inquirers.

We see then from this general view of the matter, that the *merit* of inventing *general rules* consists in reducing criticism to an *art*; and that the *use* of applying them, in practice, when the art is thus formed, is, to direct the caprices of *taste* by the authority of rule, which we call *reason.*

And, thus much being premised, we shall now be able to form a proper judgment of the *method,* which some of the most admired of the ancients, as well as moderns, have taken in this *work of criticizing.* The most eminent, at least the most popular, are, perhaps, Longinus, of the Greeks; P. Bouhours, of the French; and Mr. Addison, with us in England.

1. *All* the beautiful passages, which LONGINUS cites, are referred by him to *five* general classes. And 2dly, These general classes belong all to the *common* principle of *sublimity.* He does not say this passage is *excellent,* but assigns the *kind* of excellence, *viz. sublimity.* Neither does he content himself with the general notion of *sublimity,* but names the *species,* viz. *Grandeur* of *sentiment,*

power of moving the *passions*, &c. His work therefore enables us to *class* our perceptions of excellence, and consequently is formed on the *true plan* of criticism.

2. The same may be observed of P. BOUHOURS. The passages, cited by him, are never mentioned in *general* terms as *good* or *bad*: but are instances of good or bad *sentiment*. This is the *genus*, in which *all* his instances are comprehended: but of this genus he marks also the distinct *species*. He does not say, this sentiment is *good*; but it is *sublime*, or *natural*, or *beautiful*, or *delicate*: or, that another sentiment is *bad*; but that it is *mean*, or *false*, or *deformed*, or *affected*. To these several classes he refers his particular instances: and these classes themselves are referred to the more comprehensive principles of the excellence or fault of *single sentiment*, as opposed to the various *other* excellencies and faults, which are observed in composition.

3. Mr. ADDISON, in his *criticism on Milton*, proceeded in like manner. For, *first*, these remarks are evidently applicable to the general observations on the poem; in which every thing is referred to the common heads of *fable*, *morals*, *sentiments*, and *language*; and even the *specific* excellencies and faults considered under each head distinctly marked out. *Secondly*, The same is true concerning *many* of the observations on particular passages. The reader is not only told, that a passage *has* merit; but is informed what *sort* of merit belongs to it.

Neither are the remaining observations wholly without use. For such particular beauties and blemishes, as are barely *collected*, may yet serve as a foundation to future inquirers for making further discoveries. They may be considered as so many *single* facts, an *attention* to which is excited by the authority of the critic; and when these are considered jointly with such as *others* may have observed, those general principles of *similitude* may at length be found, which shall enable us to constitute *new* classes of poetical merit or blame.

Thus far the candid reader may go in apologizing for the *merits* of these writers. But, as, in sound criticism, candour must not be indulged at the expence of *justice*, I think myself obliged to add an observation concerning their *defects*; and *that*, on what I must think the just principles here delivered.

Though the method, taken by these writers, be *scientifical*, the real service they have done to criticism, is not very considerable. And the reason is, they dwell too much in *generals*: that is, not only the *genus* to which they refer their *species* is too large, but those very subordinate species themselves are too comprehensive.

Of the *three* critics, under consideration, the most instructive is, unquestionably, *Longinus*. The *genus* itself, under which he ranks his several *classes*, is as *particular* as the species of the other two. Yet even *his* classes are much too general to

convey any very distinct and useful information. It had been still better, if this fine critic had descended to lower and more minute *particularities*, as subordinate to *each class*. For to observe of any *sentiment*, that it is *grand*, or *pathetic*, and so of the other *species* of sublime, is saying very little. Few readers want to be informed of this. It had been sufficient, if any notice was to be taken at all of so *general* beauties, to have done it in the way, which some of the best critics have taken, of merely pointing to them. But could he have discovered and produced to observation those *peculiar* qualities in *sentiment*, which occasion the impression of *grandeur*, *pathos*, *&c.* this had been advancing the science of criticism very much, as tending to lay open the more secret and hidden springs of that *pleasure*, which results from poetical composition.

*P. Bouhours*, as I observed, is still more faulty. His very *species* are so large, as make his criticism almost wholly useless and insignificant.

It gives one pain to refuse to such a writer as Mr. *Addison* any *kind* of merit, which he appears to have valued himself upon, and which the generality of his readers have seemed willing to allow him. Yet it must not be dissembled, that *criticism* was by no means his talent. His taste was truly elegant; but he had neither that vigour of understanding, nor chastised, philosophical spirit, which are so essential to this character, and which we find in hardly any of the ancients besides Aristotle, and

but in a very few of the moderns. For what concerns his *criticism on Milton* in particular, there was this accidental benefit arising from it, that it occasioned an admirable poet to be read, and his excellencies to be observed. But for the merit of the work itself, if there be any thing just in the *plan*, it was, because Aristotle and Bossu had taken the same route before him. And as to his *own* proper observations, they are for the most part, so general and indeterminate, as to afford but little instruction to the reader, and are, not unfrequently, altogether frivolous. They are of a kind with those, in which the French critics (for I had rather instance in the defects of *foreign* writers than of our *own*) so much abound; and which good judges agree to rank in the worst sort of criticism. To give one example for all.

Cardinal PERRON, taking occasion to commend certain pieces of the poet RONSARD, chuses to deliver himself in the following manner: "Prenez de "lui quelque poëme que ce soit, il paye toujours son "lecteur, et quand la verve le prend, il se guinde en "haut, il vous porte jusques dans les nuës, il vous "fait voir mille belles choses.

"Que ses *saisons* sont *bien-faites!* Que la de-"scription de la lyre a Bertaut est *admirable!* Que "le discours au ministre, *excellent!* Tous ses "hymnes sont *beaux*. Celui de l'eternité est *admir-"able;* ceux des saisons *marveilleux*." [Perroniana.]

What now has the reader learned from this varied criticism, but that his *Eminence* was indeed very

fond of his poet; and that he esteemed these several pieces to be (what with less expence of words he might, in one breath, have called them) *well-turned, beautiful, excellent, admirable, marvellous*, poems? To have given us the true character of *each*, and to have marked the precise *degree*, as well as *kind*, of merit in these works, had been a task of another nature.

211. — QUI PECTUS INANITER ANGIT,] The word *inaniter* as well as *falsi*, applied in the following line to *terrores*, would express that wondrous force of *dramatic representation*, which compels us to take part in *feigned* adventures and situations, as if they were *real*; and exercises the passions with the same violence, in *remote fancied scenes*, as in the *present distresses of real life*.

And this is that sovereign quality in poetry, which, as an old writer of our own naturally expresses it, is of force *to hold children from play, and old men from the chimney corner*[s]. The poet, in the place before us, considers it as a kind of *magic virtue*, which transports the spectator into all *places*, and makes him, occasionally, assume all *persons*. The resemblance holds, also, in this, that its effects are instantaneous and irresistible. *Rules, art, decorum*, all fall before it. It goes directly to the *heart*, and gains all purposes at once. Hence it is, that, speaking of a real genius, possessed of this com-

[s] Sir Philip Sidney.

manding power, Horace pronounces him, emphatically, THE POET,

*Ille per extentum funem mihi posse videtur*
*Ire* POETA:

it being more especially this property, which, of itself, discovers the *true dramatist*, and secures the success of his performance, not only without the assistance of *art*, but in direct opposition to its clearest dictates.

This power has been felt on a thousand other occasions. But its triumphs were never more conspicuous, than in the famous instance of the CID of P. Corneille; which, by the sole means of this enchanting quality, drew along with it the affections and applauses of a whole people: notwithstanding the manifest transgression of some essential rules, the utmost tyranny of jealous power, and, what is more, in defiance of all the authority and good sense of one of the justest pieces of criticism in the French language, written purposely to discredit and expose it.

224. CUM LAMENTAMUR NON ADPARERE LABORES NOSTROS, &c.] It was remarked upon verse 211, that the beauties of a poem can only *appear* by being felt. And *they*, to whom they do not appear in this instance, are the writer's own *friends*, who, it is not to be supposed, would disguise their *feelings*. So that the *lamentation*, here spoken of, is at once a proof of *impertinence* in the poet, and

of the *badness* of his poetry, which sets the complainant in a very ridiculous light.

228. EGERE VETES.] The poet intended, in these words, a very just satire on those presuming *wits and scholars*, who, under the pretence of getting above distressful *want*, in reality aspire to public honours and preferments; though this be the most inexcusable of all follies (to give it the softest name), which can infest a man of letters: Both, because experience, on which a wise man would chuse to regulate himself, is contrary to these hopes; and, because if literary merit could succeed in them, the *Reward*, as the poet speaks,

*would either bring*
*No joy, or be destructive of the thing:*

That is, the learned would either have no relish for the delights of so widely different a situation; or, which hath oftener been the case, would lose the learning itself, or the *love* of it at least, on which their pretensions to this *reward* are founded.

232. GRATUS ALEXANDRO REGI MAGNO &c.] This praise of Augustus, arising from the comparison of his character with that of Alexander, is extremely fine. It had been observed of the Macedonian by his historians and panegyrists, that, to the stern virtues of the *conqueror*, he had joined the softer accomplishments of the *virtuoso*, in a just discernment and love of *poetry*, and of the *elegant arts*.

The one was thought clear from his admiration and study of Homer: And the *other*, from his famous edict concerning Apelles and Lysippus, could not be denied. Horace finds means to turn both these circumstances in his story to the advantage of his prince.

From his extravagant pay of such a wretched versifier, as *Choerilus*, he would insinuate, that Alexander's love of the muse was, in fact, but a blind unintelligent impulse towards *glory*. And from his greater skill in the arts of *sculpture* and *painting*, than of *verse*, he represents him as more concerned about the *drawing* of his figure, than the pourtraiture of his *manners* and *mind*. Whereas Augustus, by his liberalities to *Varius* and *Virgil*, had discovered the truest taste in the *art*, from which he expected immortality: and, in trusting to *that*, as the *chief* instrument of his fame, had confessed a prior regard to those *mental virtues*, which are the real ornament of humanity, before that *look of terror*, and *air and attitude of victory*, in which the brute violence of Alexander most delighted to be shewn.

243. MUSARUM DONA] The expression is happy; as implying, that these *images* of virtue, which are represented as of such importance to the glory of princes, are not the mere *offerings* of poetry to greatness, but the *free-gifts* of the muse to the poet. For it is only to such *works*, as these, that

Horace attributes the wondrous efficacy of expressing the *manners and mind* in fuller and more durable relief, than *sculpture* gives to the *exterior figure.*

*Non magis expressi vultus per aëneа signa,*
*Quam per vatis opus mores animique virorum*
*Clarorum adparent.*

247.—VIRGILIUS.] Virgil is mentioned, in this place, simply as a *Poet.* The precise idea of his *poetry* is given us elsewhere.

*molle atque facetum*
*Virgilio annuerunt gaudentes rure Camoenae.*
1 Sat. x. 44.

But this may appear a strange praise of the sweet and polished Virgil. It appeared so to Quinctilian, who cites this passage, and explains it, without doubt, very justly, yet in such a way as shews that he was not quite certain of the truth of his explanation.

The case, I believe, was this. The word *facetum,* which makes the difficulty, had acquired, in Quinctilian's days, the sense of *pleasant, witty,* or *facetious, in exclusion* to every other idea, which had formerly belonged to it. It is true that, in the Augustan age, and still earlier, *facetum* was sometimes used in this sense. But its proper and original meaning was no more than *exact, factitatum, benè factum.* And in this strict sense, I believe, it is always used by Horace.

*Malthinus tunicis demissis ambulat: est qui*
*Inguen ad obscoenum subductis usque facetus.*
1 S. II. 25.

i. e. *tucked up, trim, expedite.*

*Mutatis tantùm pedibus numerisque facetus.*
1 S. IV. 7.

i. e. he [Lucilius] adopted a *stricter* measure, than the writers of the old comedy; or, by changing the loose iambic to the Hexameter verse, he gave a proof of his *art, skill,* and *improved judgment.*

*frater, pater, adde;*
*Ut cuique est aetas, ita quemque* facetus *adopta.*
1. Ep. VI. 55.

i. e. *nicely* and *accurately* adapt your address to the age and condition of each.

I do not recollect any other place where *facetus* is used by Horace; and in all these it seems probable to me that the principal idea, conveyed by it, is that of *care, art, skill,* only differently modified according to the subject to which it is applied: a gown tucked up *with care* — a measure *studiously* affected — an address *nicely* accommodated — No thought of *ridicule* or *pleasantry* intended.

It is the same in the present instance —

MOLLE ATQUE FACETUM

i. e. *a soft flowing versification,* and *an exquisitely finished expression:* the two precise, characteristic merits of Virgil's *rural* poetry.

This change, in the sense of words, is common in all languages, and creeps in so gradually and im-

perceptibly as to elude the notice, sometimes, of the best critics, even in their own language. The transition of ideas, in the present instance, may be traced thus. As what was *wittily* said, was most *studied, artificial,* and *exquisite,* hence in process of time *facetum* lost its primary sense, and came to signify merely, *witty*.

We have a like example in our own language. A *good wit* meant formerly a man of good natural sense and understanding: but because what we now call *wit* was observed to be the flower and quintessence, as it were, of good sense, hence *a man of wit* is now the exclusive attribute of one who exerts his good sense in that peculiar manner.

247. DILECTI TIBI VIRGILIUS &c.] It does honour to the memory of Augustus, that he bore the *affection*, here spoken of, to this amiable poet; who was not more distinguished from his contemporary writers by the force of an original, inventive genius, than the singular benevolence and humanity of his character. Yet there have been critics of so perverse a turn, as to discover an inclination, at least, of disputing both.

1. Some have taken offence at his supposed unfriendly neglect of Horace, who, on every occasion, shewed himself so ready to lavish all his praises on him. But the folly of this slander is of a piece with its malignity, as proceeding on the absurd fancy, that Virgil's friends might as easily have slid

into such works, as the Georgics and Eneïs, as those of Horace into the various occasional poems, which employed his pen.

Just such another senseless suspicion hath been raised of his jealousy of Homer's superior glory (a vice, from which the nature of the great poet was singularly abhorrent), only, because he did not think fit to give him the first place among the poets in *Elysium*, several hundred years before he had so much as made his appearance upon *earth*.

But these petty calumnies of his *moral* character hardly deserve a confutation. What some greater authorities have objected to his *poetical*, may be thought more serious. For,

2. It has been given out by some of better note among the moderns, and from thence, according to the customary influence of authority, hath become the prevailing sentiment of the generality of the learned, that the great poet was more indebted for his fame to the *exactness of his judgment; to his industry, and a certain trick of imitation*, than to the energy of natural genius; which he is thought to have possessed in a very slender degree.

This charge is founded on the similitude, which all acknowledge, betwixt his great work, the Aeneis, and the poems of Homer. But, "how far such similitude infers imitation; or, how far imitation itself infers an inferiority of natural genius in the imitator," this hath never been considered. In short the affair of *imitation* in poetry, though one of the

most curious and interesting in all criticism, hath been, hitherto, very little understood: as may appear from hence, that there is not, as far as I can learn, one single treatise, now extant, written purposely to explain it; the discourse, which the learned *Menage* intended, and which, doubtless, would have given light to this matter, having never, as I know of, been made public. To supply, in some measure, this loss, I have thought it not amiss to put together and methodize a few reflexions of my own on this subject, which (because the matter is large, and cannot easily be drawn into a compass, that suits with the nature of these occasional remarks) the reader will find in a distinct and separate dissertation upon it[t].

## CONCLUSION.

And, now, having explained, in the best manner I could, the two famous Epistles of Horace to Augustus and the Pisos, it may be expected, in conclusion, that I should say something of the rest of our poet's critical writings. For his *Sermones* (under which general term I include his *Epistles)* are of two sorts, Moral and Critical; and, though both are exquisite, the *latter* are perhaps, in their kind, the more perfect of the two; his *moral* principles being sometimes, I believe, liable to exception, his *critical*, never.

[t] Diss. III. vol. ii.

The two pieces, illustrated in these volumes, are *strictly* critical: the *first*, being a professed criticism of the Roman drama; and the *last*, in order to their vindication, of the Roman poets. The rest of his works, which turn upon this subject of criticism, may be rather termed *Apologetical*. They are the IV^th^ and X^th^ of the FIRST, and I^st^ of the SECOND book of Satires; and the XIX^th^ of the FIRST, and, in part, the II^d^ of the SECOND book of Epistles.

In *these*, the poet has THREE great objects; one or other of which he never loses sight of, and generally he prosecutes them all together, in the same piece. These objects are, 1. to vindicate the way of writing in satire. 2. To justify his opinion of a favourite writer of this class, the celebrated Lucilius. And 3. to expose the careless and incorrect composition of the Roman writers.

He was himself deeply concerned in these three articles; so that he makes his own apology at the same time that he criticizes or censures others. The *address* of the poet's manner will be seen by bearing in mind this general purpose of his critical poetry. How he came to be *engaged* in this controversy, will best appear from a few observations on the state of the Roman learning, when he undertook to contribute his pains to the improvement of it.

I have, in the introduction to the first of these volumes, given a slight sketch of the rise and progress of the Roman satire. This poem, was purely of Roman invention: *first of all*, struck out of the old fescennine farce, and rudely cultivated, by Ennius;

*Next*, more happily treated, and enriched with the best part of the old comedy, by Lucilius: And, after some succeeding essays, taken up and finally adorned, by Horace.

HORACE was well known to the public by his lyric compositions, and still more perhaps by his favour at court, when he took upon him to correct the manners and taste of his age, by his *Lucilian Satires*. But, here, he encountered, at once, many prejudices; and all his own credit, together with that of his court-friends, was little enough to support him, against the torrent.

FIRST, the kind of writing itself was sure to give offence. For, though men were well enough pleased to have their natural malignity gratified by an old poet's satire against a *former* age, yet they were naturally alarmed at the exercise of this talent upon their *own*, and, as it might chance, upon themselves.

The poet's eminence, and favour, would, besides, give a peculiar force and *effect* to his censures, so that all who found, or thought themselves liable to them, were concerned, in interest, to discredit the attempt, and blast his rising reputation.

*Omnes hi metuunt versus, odere* POETAM.

Hence, he was constrained to stand upon his own defence, and to vindicate, as well the thing itself, as his management of it, to the tender and suspicious public.

But this was not all: For, SECONDLY, an old satirist, of high birth and quality, LUCILIUS, was considered, not only as an able writer of this class,

but as a perfect model in it; and of course, therefore, this new satirist would be much decried and undervalued, on the comparison. This circumstance obliged the poet to reduce this admired writer to his real value; which could not be done without thwarting the general admiration, and pointing out his vices and defects in the freest manner. This perilous task he discharged in the IV^th satire of his first book, and with such rigour of criticism, that not only the partizans of Lucilius, in the poet's own age, but the most knowing and candid critics of succeeding times, were disposed to complain of it. However, the obnoxious step had been taken; and nothing remained but to justify himself, as he hath done at large, in his X^th satire.

On the whole, in comparing what he has said in these two satires with what Quinctilian long after observed on the subject of them, there seems no reason to conclude, that the poet judged ill; though he expressed his judgment in such terms as he would, no doubt, have something softened (out of complaisance to the general sentiment, and a becoming deference to the real merits of his master), if his adversaries had been more moderate in urging their charge, or if the occasion had not been so pressing.

*Lastly*, this attack on Lucilius produced, or rather involved in it, a THIRD quarrel. The poet's main objection to Lucilius was his careless, verbose, and hasty composition, which his admirers, no doubt, called genius, grace, and strength. This

being an inveterate folly among his countrymen, he gives it no quarter. Through all his critical works, he employs the utmost force of his wit and good sense to expose it: And his own writings, being at the same time supremely correct, afforded his enemies (which would provoke them still more) no advantage against him. Yet they attempted, as they could, to repay his perpetual reproaches on the popular writers for their neglect of *limae labor*, by objecting to him, in their turn, that what he wrote was *sine nervis*: and this, though they felt his *force* themselves, and though another set of men were complaining, at the same time, of his *severity*.

*Sunt quibus in satyrâ videor nimis* ACER—
SINE NERVIS *altera quicquid*
*Composui pars esse putat, similesque meorum*
Mille die versus *deduci posse*—

His detractors satirically alluding, in these last words, to his charge against Lucilius—

in horâ *saepè* ducentos,
*Ut magnum*, versus *dictabat, stans pede in uno.*

It is not my purpose, in this place, to enlarge further on the character of Lucilius, whose *wordy* satires gave occasion to our poet's criticism. Several of the ancient writers speak of him occasionally, in terms of the highest applause; and without doubt, he was a poet of distinguished merit. Yet it will hardly be thought, at this day, that it could be any discredit to him to be censured, rivalled, and excelled by Horace.

What I have here put together is only to furnish the young reader with the proper KEY to Horace's critical works, which generally turn on his own vindication, *against the enemies of satire—the admirers of Lucilius—and the patrons of loose and incorrect composition.*

In managing these several topics, he has found means to introduce a great deal of exquisite criticism. And though his scattered observations go but a little way towards making up a complete critical system, yet they are so *luminous*, as the French speak, that is, they are so replete with good sense, and extend so much further than to the case to which they are immediately applied, that they furnish many of the principles on which such a system, if ever it be taken in hand, must be constructed: And, without carrying matters too far, we may safely affirm of these *Critical Discourses*, that, next to Aristotle's immortal work, they are the most valuable remains of ancient art upon this subject.

*The End of the Notes on the Epistle to* AUGUSTUS.

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H.G.

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